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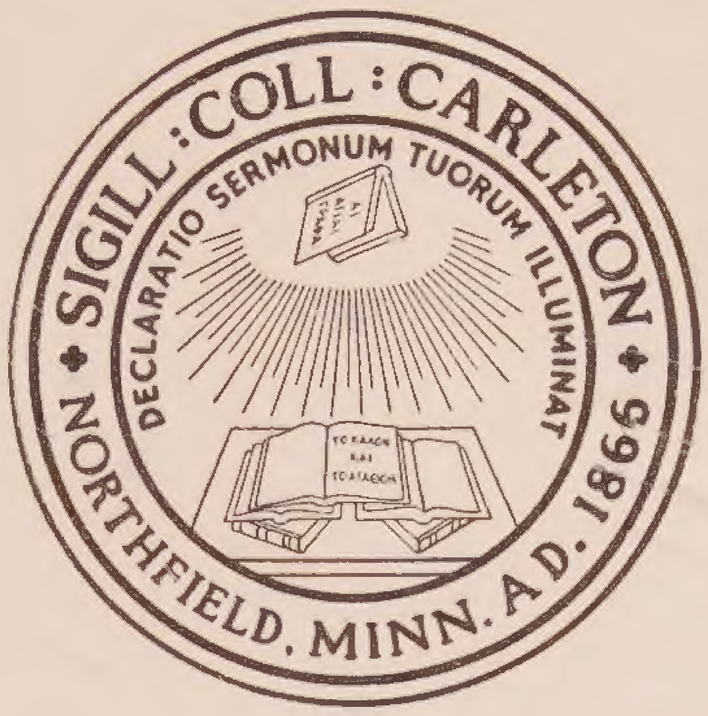

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ESSAYS BY JAMES HUNEKER

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SELECTED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
H. L. MENCKEN

Huneker, James Gibbons

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1932

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INTRODUCTION

I

The world that James Gibbons Huneker knew, celebrated and adorned has gone down the dreadful chutes of time, and already begins to seem as fabulous as the world of John Palæologus. In Europe the great crusade for democracy finished it, and in the United States it was blasted by the *jacquerie* whose horrible symbol is Prohibition. He lived long enough to see it disintegrate and vanish from sight, with all its easy well-being, its calm and amiable curiosities, its pleasant cockiness—himself, by that time, become a mere show for pathologists, with one leg thrust through the crematory door. I have never known a man whose falling years were more melancholy. The work of his life was behind him and he knew it: what he did of an evening for *The World* was only a laborious boiling of the pot. On all sides loomed wrack and wreck, rust and ruin. The old battles were over and half forgotten; the old delights were under the Methodist interdict; of the old friends, more were dead than alive; all the ancient and charming haunts were dark.

I saw him only infrequently in those sad days, for, save to do his evening newspaper stint, he seldom ventured out of his remote and somewhat mysterious Brooklyn lair. There was, indeed, nothing to bring him, for there was no place to go. New York was still on its lugubrious Prohibition honeymoon, and the art of the bootician was yet as primitive as painting in the time of Giovanni Cimabue. Lüchow's, with the Pilsner taps running coca-cola, was an inferno of protesting ghosts; Scheffel Hall was dark and creepy; old Sieg had closed the Kaiser-Keller and departed for parts unknown; Jack's and Rogers' were ready to give up; even the spaghetti joints were going dry. During the Summer of 1920 Huneker

had gone to London for *The World,* and there, grinding out 25,000 words of correspondence in five weeks, he put in his afternoons at the resurrected Gambrinius, flushing his clogged pipes with the elixir of happier days. "It is," he wrote to me, with an autumnal glare of the old rapture, "genuine Pilsner from Bohemia! It has expelled the sugar from my blood!" But when he got back to Brooklyn there was only tea to drink, and so the sugar returned, and soon the news began to go about that the old boy was done for. My last word from him came on January 22, 1921. "'Painted Veils'," he wrote, "has aroused the anger of the barnyard school of fictionists and its critics, much to my joy. Anything to make imbeciles realize their imbecility!" But that joy was not to be for long. Two weeks later, on February 9, he died. Prohibition was one year and twenty-one days old.

So passed one of the most charming fellows ever heard of, and the best critic of the American first line. The young professors who write literary history for sophomores seldom mention him to-day, but there was vastly more in him than in all their N. P. Willises and Charles Dudley Warners—nay, than in all their Lowells and Howellses. Alone among the men of his generation he knew precisely which way the literary current was running, and alone among them he kept his bark in the middle of the stream to the end. It is not enough to say that he was the chief man in the movement of the 90's on this side of the ocean; he was, indeed, the only man who mattered at all, for he was the only one who never wavered. The rest went this way and that way—into popularity, into preciosity, into futility and banality. Some even fetched up in the movies! But Huneker stuck. The tune that he piped in 1891—and with what lovely shakes, appoggiaturas and grimaces!—he was still piping in 1920. To clear out the tripe-sellers in all of the seven arts—that was his first purpose. To bring in better men—odd men, men of free fancy, sometimes even wild men—that was his second. No Ameri-

can, not even Poe, ever dragged in more of them, or made the dragging in a more exhilarating show.

For years, indeed, he was our official introducer of æsthetic and philosophical ambassadors, and if now and then he gave an incautious whoop for a newcomer whose fraudulence became obvious a moment later, then let us not forget that he always made amends for it by giving extra measure next day. He was the first American to write about Ibsen with anything approaching rational understanding of the artist behind the whiskers; he was the first to sense the true stature of Nietzsche, both as dithyrambist and as metaphysician; he was in the forefront of the army corps that discovered George Bernard Shaw. At a time when Turgenev and Dostoyevsky were still setting Howells to a guilty trembling, he was thumping the tom-tom boldly for Huysmans, Rimbaud and Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Did he praise Sudermann too much? Then remember that it was the Sudermann of "Frau Sorge" and "Sodoms Ende"—and consider how much worse some of his contemporaries were let in: for example, Percival Pollard by Robert W. Chambers and La Atherton. "My temperament," he once said, "has always inclined to the excessive, the full-blown, the flamboyant." It made him succumb a shade too easily, no doubt, to the mountebankish Maeterlinck, but it was not too excessive and full-blown to let him discern instantly the difference between the reigning godkins of 1895 and Gerhart Hauptmann. It was exactly his *héliogabalisme,* indeed, that led him to some of his most solid pioneering: for Strindberg among dramatists, for Stirner among philosophers, and for Richard Strauss among composers.

"To spill his own soul: that should be the critic's aim." The soul that Huneker spilled so lavishly in his hey-day—how many millions of words he must have written, first and last!—was perhaps the most colorful, as it was assuredly the most charming, ever turned loose in these sorry States. The

man was essentially and inescapably civilized. He believed completely in the importance of ideas, the high value of beauty. Emerging by some inadvertence of the gods from the spiritual slums of Philadelphia, soberly bred and badly fed, he showed from the start all the fine gustos of a born connoisseur. Life to him was never a trial to be endured or a lesson to be learned, but always a magnificent adventure. I knew him best in his later years, when the marks of illness were already upon him and the world that he was most at home in was already on the way to collapse, but never do I recall any relaxation of his immense curiosity or any lessening in his hospitality to novelty. What he brought back from Paris as a young man was what chiefly characterized him to the end of his days: his capacity for enthusiasm. It seems to me that he had that capacity to a degree unmatched in any other American, before or since; he was an Emerson purged of the last drop of moralic acid, a Howells liberated completely from the New England malaria. When his soul went adventuring among masterpieces (real and so-to-speak) it did not go in Sunday broadcloth; it went with vine-leaves in its gaseous and flaming hair. The one aim of the arts, by his philosophy, was to make the spirit glad—to set it to dancing, in Nietzsche's phrase, with arms and legs. He had absolutely no feeling for extra-æsthetic values, whether sound or false. If the work that stood before him was honest, if it was original, if it was beautifully and thoroughly alive, then he was for it to his last corpuscle. What if it violated all the accepted canons of decorum? Then let the canons of decorum go hang! What if it lacked all purpose to improve and lift up? Then so much the better! What if it outraged all men of right feeling, and made them blush, tremble and cough behind their hands? Then damn all men of right feeling forevermore!

Along with this critical antinomianism, so strange in the America that he came back to in the early 80's and so revolt-

ing to most Americans, there went something that was also, in all probability, part of the loot of Paris: an insatiable curiosity about the artist as man. To a Frenchman, as every one knows, a painter is never a mere painter, nor a composer a mere composer; he is also a husband and a lover, a consumer of victuals, a drinker of good or bad wine, a politician, a public spectacle, a citizen and patriot, a Christian or a heathen, the host of microbes, the partisan of a metaphysical theory. So in the eye of Huneker. His curiosity in such secret directions sometimes went to extravagant lengths. He mingled criticism and gossip in a way unheard of by the audience that followed Hamilton Wright Mabie. He liked to prod into marriages, liaisons, feuds literary and carnal, lawsuits, vices, scandals of all sorts. The guzzling and drabbing of Liszt interested him profoundly, and he found in them a clue to the Hungarian rhapsodies. He always thought of Wagner, not in terms of howling sopranos and grunting basses, but in terms of the Tribschen idyl and the Bayreuth court. Tschaikovsky's love affairs, to him, explained the "Romeo et Juliette" atrocity, and Dvořák's herculean capacity for cocktails the gorgeous last movement of "From the New World." He was far more interested in Walt Whitman as man, I think, than in Walt Whitman as poet. A man of wide travels, endless contacts and enormous reading, he picked up such details everywhere, and filed them away in his archives, well-indexed and instantly available. So far as I can recall, he never wrote a piece of criticism without adding to it a piece of biography. Even his most casual newspaper stuff was packed with gossip.

II

And what gossip it was! It made his conversation the most delightful imaginable. There was not only stupendous

information in it; there was also a gaudy sort of malice—as there is, indeed, in all conversation worth hearing. I recall sessions at Lüchow's, with old August himself hovering in the background, that were veritable debauches of sly and stimulating scandal. Down went a *Seidel* of Pilsner—and out came the authentic last words of Whitman, gasped into poor Horace Traubel's solicitous ear, and too horrible, almost, to be remembered in a Christian land. Down went another—and out came a precise and meticulous description of Liszt's vast flotilla of warts and wens: the purple ones and the pale ones, the big ones and the little ones. Down went a third—and the theme was the virtuous love affairs of Gounod, or Wagner's encounter with the lascivious Swedish baroness, or the true story of Zola's asphyxiation, or the details of the affair between Duse and D'Annunzio, or Shaw's heroic but vain efforts to throw off the Thirty-nine Articles, or the secret causes of Tschaikowsky's suicide, or the early lives of the de Reszke brothers in their Polish home, or the varying talents and idiosyncracies of Lillian Russell's first four husbands. Down went a fourth—and there was coruscating, confidential discourse upon the defects in the Boehm system, the merits of German bath-rooms, the difficulties of Brahms' capriccio in B minor, the proper tuning of the viol da gamba, the metaphysical errors of the Gnostics, the neckties of Richard Harding Davis, the bad red wines at Wiesbaden, the worse red wines at Capri, the Pilsner at Carlsbad, the Pilsner at Vienna, the Pilsner at Prague, the Pilsner at Pilsen.

What should one drink with a *Rebhuhn* in *Weinkraut?* What is best for Moselle *Katzenjammer?* Who really invented the saxaphone, and now roasts in Hell for it? What would be the effect of Hoboken steam beer upon a Bavarian? Where is the authentic home of *bouillabaise?* Does the study of Latin and Greek spoil women for love? Are the great German brewers, the Pschorrs, honestly proud that

Richard Strauss is their cousin? Did the tubercle bacillus improve or injure Chopin's music? What assassin invented the New York scheme of frying soft crabs in batter? Why were boiled potatoes always served with *Rinderbrust mit Meerrettig?* Did the invention of macaroni precede or follow the invention of the pipe-organ? Was St. Thomas Aquinas really an atheist in disguise? Why were all the German dictionaries silent about the etymology of *Risi-Bisi?* I have heard him discuss all these grave and gloomy problems, the while Otto and Emil hauled in the Pilsner and his tonsils comfortably steamed. He was full of strange and fantastic information, much of it plainly apocryphal, but all of it immensely amusing. His musical anecdotes went back to the days of Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and embraced the latest conductor in Broadway. Raphael Joseffy was his authority in all things pianistic—with Pachmann as a sort of court of appeals. Joseffy told him this; Pachmann assured him of that. He knew how much Rubinstein could drink, and why d'Albert left his second, third and fourth wives. You will find a lot to the same effect in "Old Fogy" and "Steeplejack," but the best was reserved for the *Biertisch.* He was its greatest adornment in the western world. His feet under its blackened oak, with Otto hovering to one side and Emil to the other, he was truly magnificent. I have heard them all, but he was the best. His conversation, indeed, made his books seem almost funereal.

Just what arts he included among the seven I don't know, but certainly cooking must have been one of them. Imagine such a man spending his last days on a diet, with only gluten-bread to eat and only unsweetened tea to drink! It was torture that would have made Prometheus yell. "The stomach of Vienna," he said in one of his books, "first interested me; not its soul." Even above the Strauss waltzes he put the *Apfelstrudel* and the *Kaiserschmarrn.* But the ear crowded the palate pretty closely: he was a musician before

he was anything else. Turn to "Steeplejack," where he tells of his youth and its dreams: "I would fain be a pianist, a composer of music." The pianist he remained to the end of his days, ever concerned about *tempi,* traditions, shades of interpretation, but if he ever wrote any music he took good care to burn it. My guess is that it would have been Chopinesque, for a sentimentalist was concealed in him—more, it stuck out. Chopin was his first love and his last love, and of all his books he was proudest of the one on the Polish tuberose. In his last month of life he wrote to me about the new German translation—how well it was done, how beautifully it was bound, how punctilious the publisher had been about sending him a check while the mark still had some value. His volume on Liszt had blood in it too, but from the head rather than from the heart. The emperor of warts and wens he venerated as the greatest pianist of them all, but for Chopin he had a genuine devotion, almost a vocation: Chopin was his god.

For orchestral music, though what he wrote about Brahms and Strauss was brilliant with insight, he had less feeling: he was essentially a pianist. Nor was he a partisan of the opera: the singers interested him far more than the thick, heavy music and the preposterous staging, and not much that he wrote about Wagner was better than "Isolde's Mother" in "Melomaniacs." In his declining years, somewhat upset in judgment, he devoted nearly a whole book to Mary Garden, a favorite warbler of the time. There was a touch of precision in his make-up that craved the pearly clarity of the black keys and white; he could see through a piano piece, but a symphony in the grand manner, I half suspect, often left him uneasy. Once he told me that he believed most of the classical symphonies, and especially Mozart's, sounded better in four-hand piano arrangement than in the concert-hall. In that form he knew all of them backward and forward, from Haydn's Surprise to César Franck's in D minor.

And he had a wide and profound knowledge, too, of chamber music, and especially of that kind which found room for the piano. For vocal music he cared a great deal less, for, like most sound musicians, he found unpleasant tones in the human voice. His rage for Mary Garden was surely not grounded upon any solid admiration for the singer; what interested him was the charm of the woman.

It is common news that in the other arts he sometimes slipped sadly. For many years painters were his everyday associates, but what he wrote of painting never showed him at its best. When he had gone with the Post-Impressionists he had gone about as far as he could go: the ensuing chromomaniacs puzzled him a good deal more than they delighted him. In the theatre he was so much the eclectic that it was often difficult to tell which way he was headed: Maeterlinck, Hervieu, Brieux, and Wedekind apparently looked much the same to him. This eclecticism, more than once, led him into dubious waters, and only the endless resources of his immense cleverness got him back to dry land. But when the dramatist was also a philosopher he could write about him with great persuasiveness. The early Shaw, in his hands, took on a coherence that was probably only an afterthought to Shaw himself. And he wrote superbly about Hauptmann. Here the dramatic critic merged with the critic of letters. He was on the lookout in that direction to the end, though while the music season raged he had little time for reading. If he was not the first to hail William McFee, then he was not far from the second. And he did some valiant whooping for Joseph Conrad long before the general roar.

III

Huneker's excess of eclecticism, his chief defect, was probably largely grounded upon simple amiability. There was

little of the Berserker in him. He detested what he called the tripe-sellers of the market-place as much as most, but he seldom attacked them head-on. His method was the indirect one of crying up the sellers of honest red herring. He disliked combat, and was no hand at sanitary tearing down. Thus he made no splash as a critic of critics: to him they were all able and honest fellows, doing their level damnedest to nourish the enlightenment—even J. Ranken Towse of *The Evening Post,* even the half-fabulous Henry J. Finck of the same eminent paper. In "Steeplejack," to be sure, there are some tart things about William Winter, the greatest bad critic who ever lived, but he puts the worst of them off on Charlie McLellan, the librettist of "The Belle of New York." The New York of his time swarmed with critical mountebanks, and some of them attained to dangerous influence, but Huneker never addressed himself to clearing them out: he was content to offer better stuff, and let it go at that. The fine bellicosity of a Shaw was simply not in him. He had his share of malice, but it never rose to indignation. He enjoyed making "imbeciles realize their imbecility," but he harbored no longing to crack their heads.

Here politeness often verged upon timorousness, and that timorousness, I believe, had its roots in the curious modesty of the man. I have never known an artist who was more sincerely humble. Thrown all his lifelong among actors, opera singers, piano and fiddle players, novelists, star newspaper reporters, painters, critics and other such shameless exhibitionists, he yet managed to remain self-effacing himself. It always seemed a bit incredible to him when some one praised his work, and he was visibly uncomfortable whenever it was compared, to his credit, with that of others. I recall arguing with him for hours that most of his fellow music critics in New York were palpable charlatans, with nothing even remotely approaching a sound knowledge of music, and no apparent talent for writing. He refused flatly

to grant me any case at all. He said I exaggerated. I set up impossible standards. I forgot the harsh rigors of their nightly labor. I blamed poor slaves for the sins of their papers. And so on and so on, endlessly to the same effect. The best I could dredge out of him was a categorical admission that it was an idiocy to praise Massenet and denounce Richard Strauss. The same had been done by one of his colleagues, but he refused to apply the principle to the man. In his private psychiatry idiocy was divided, like sin, into two kinds: the venial and the mortal. The idiocies of his friends were all venial.

This modesty, by a strange twist, made him grasp somewhat absurdly at certain kinds of recognition. When, running out of bad novelists, the National Institute of Arts and Letters offered him its ribbon, he accepted at once. It was, in essence, a comic episode: election to the colored Elks would have been far less inappropriate. But it was a long while before he could see it that way; at the start it seemed to him to be a high and undeserved honor, even a condescension! Toward the end of his life he came to a more rational view of it, and he died protesting that he had never worn the badge of the society. Instead—but let him tell it himself: "Last Summer (1920), in London, I wore a button sent to me by the *Bürgermeister* of Vienna, conferring upon me the freedom of that unhappy city. I did this for the sake of sheer paradox; beside, it was a touchstone for Austrian and German waiters working as Swiss in the Gambrinus and other beer-halls. I wish you could have seen the look of mingled awe and astonishment when they saw the button! *Ach, Herr Jessus, sint Sie Oestreicher?* . . . I don't blame you for wanting to shoot me if I had worn the other button."

But it had tickled him quietly in its day, for it seemed a help up the fragile beanstalk he was always talking of. "I tried to climb," he says in "Steeplejack," summing up his life at sixty, "but my muscles were undeveloped and wings

I had none to speak of; the consequences may be well imagined. Many a tumble, broken bones, and what sentimentalists would describe as shattered illusions. . . . Life has been the Barmecide's feast to me—you remember the Arabian Nights—; no sooner did I covet a rare dish than fate whisked it out of my reach. I love painting and sculpture: I may only look, but never own either pictures or marbles. I would fain be a pianist, a composer of music: I am neither. Nor a poet. Nor a novelist, actor, playwright. I have written of many things from architecture to zoölogy without grasping their inner substance. I am Jack of the Seven Arts, master of none. . . . My story is the story of an unquiet soul who voyaged from city to city, country to country, in search of something, he knew not what. The golden grapes of desire were never plucked, the marvellous mirage of the Seven Arts never overtaken, the antique and beautiful porches of philosophy, the solemn temples of religion never penetrated."

And a great deal more to the same melancholy effect. The Pilsner taps had been running coca-cola for a year when these words were set down, else I should have my suspicions. It was the worst critical judgment in a lifetime of critical judgments. Huneker surely did not live in vain. True, he left no school, save maybe transiently, and all the young critics of to-day turn away from his innocent delight in all lovely and amusing things to seek inspiration in the moral sitz-baths of More, Babbitt and company. But even the young critics owe him an immense debt—a vaster debt, indeed, than they will ever owe to their current masters. For it was Huneker, more than any other, who cleared the grove of the far worse masters next preceding—the Mabies and William Winters, the Fincks and Brander Matthewses, the Tartuffes and Pecksniffs, the literary Sunday-school superintendents and vice-crusaders, the concocters of White Lists of books, the shrill fuglemen of bad painting, maudlin music,

valentine poetry, tin-pot drama and bogus criticism. Huneker was ever so polite to them, but when he had had his say they were done. He brought in a clearer, cleaner air. He knew vastly more than they did, and he said it infinitely better. The art of criticism, as they practised it, was a branch of Christian endeavor; its aim was to make more and better Presbyterians; it ranged in tone from the solemn grunting of a bishop denouncing birth control to the kittenish whimsicality of a suburban curate trying to shock the Ladies' Aid Society. Huneker related it to living ideas, to all the great movements of human forces, to life itself. The world to him was a single entity, and each of the seven arts was a brother to all the others. To him a new play in Copenhagen, if only truth was in it, had inevitable repercussions in New York. Himself a divine mongrel, half Irish and the rest God knows what, he knew no nationalities and no schools. Whatever was genuinely original, whatever said something really new, whatever brought some bit of the unknown down into the known—that was unfailingly interesting to him, and he knew how to make it interesting to others—interesting and important.

So he plowed his ground and planted his seed. At a time when the Winters and Matthewses were still snuffling over the cup-and-saucer plays of Robertson, the puerile artificialities of Scribe and Sardou, and "The Man in the Iron Mask," he was preaching the new and revolutionary dramaturgy of Ibsen and Strindberg. In the golden age of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair," and the saccharine covers of the *Ladies' Home Journal* he was expounding the ideas of the Post-Impressionists. In the midst of "Hearts and Flowers," Tosti's "Good-bye" and the Sousa marches, he was busy with spade work for Brahms and Richard Strauss. And before even the youngest professors had got over Schopenhauer, he was hauling ashore the devil-fish, Nietzsche. No stranger poisons ever came through the customs than those he brought

in his baggage. No man among us ever urged more ardently, or with sounder knowledge or greater persuasiveness, that civilized catholicity of taste which downs and damns the snarling narrowness of Little Bethel. He was, in his amiable way, the sworn and relentless foe to all "the traps that snare the attention from poor or mediocre workmanship—the traps of sentimentalism, of false feeling, of cheap pathos, of the cheap moral." He was the complete antithesis to all the brummagem "Philistines of culture" who "clutter the market-place with their booths, mischievous half-art and tubs of tripe and soft soap." On the surface, as I have said, it may seem that the work of his lifetime went for little or nothing. There is a swing back to the pious, pseudo-intellectual flummery that he abhorred. Bad critics, failing at the trade, turn professors, moralists, tub-thumpers. But Huneker, dead, is still alive enough to pull powerfully the other way. His influence, surviving him, is a formidable obstacle to complete surrender. In the midst of the prayer-meeting one hears anon his ribald laugh and his reassuring *"Grüss Gott!"*

His criticism had the florid and baroque charm of the man himself: it was the product of an exuberant, a lavish and a happy soul. It had the shimmering surface of an ornate and intricate fabric, and beneath there was a great richness. Despite its enormous allusiveness, it was never a mere *pastiche;* the selection of authorities, Christian and heathen, virtuous and wicked, far and near, was made delicately, discreetly, with unerring taste and judgment. And in the summing up there was always the clearest possible statement of the whole matter, with a gaudy jest to drive it home. What finally emerged was a body of doctrine that came, I believe, very close to the truth. It seldom shows any sign of wearing out; it remains, in all essentials, as sound to-day as when it was set down. Thus Huneker left his mark upon his time. No man could have been less a reformer by

inclination, and yet he became a reformer beyond compare. He emancipated criticism in America from its old bondage to sentimentality and stupidity, and with it he emancipated all the arts themselves.

H. L. MENCKEN.

ESSAYS BY JAMES HUNEKER

I

THE QUINTESSENCE OF SHAW

I

To my friend, George Bernard Shaw, the Celtic superman, critic, novelist, socialist, and preface writer, to whom the present author—*circa* 1890—played the part of a critical finger-post for the everlasting benefit (he sincerely hopes) of the great American public; and to whom he now dedicates this particular essay in gratitude for the rare and stimulating pleasure afforded him by the Shaw masks, the Shavian philosophy, and also the vivid remembrance of several personal encounters at London and Bayreuth.

The announcement that Bernard Shaw, moralist, Fabianite, vegetarian, playwright, critic, Wagnerite, Ibsenite, jester to the cosmos, and the most serious man on the planet, had written a play on the subject of Don Juan did not surprise his admirers. As Nietzsche philosophized with a hammer, so G. B. S. hammers popular myths. If you have read his Cæsar and Cleopatra you will know what I mean. This witty, sarcastic piece is the most daring he has attempted. Some years ago I described the Shaw literary pedigree as—W. S. Gilbert out of Ibsen. His plays are full of modern odds and ends, and in form are anything from the Robertsonian comedy to the Gilbertian extravaganza. They may be called psychical farce, an intellectual *comédie rosse*—for his people are mostly a blackguard crew of live-ly marionettes all talking pure Shaw-ese. Mr. Shaw has invented a new individual in literature who for want of a better name could be called the *Super-Cad;* he is Nietzsche's Superman turned "bounder"—and sometimes the sex is feminine.

We wonder what sort of drama this remarkable Hibernian would have produced if he had been a flesh-eater. If

he is so brilliant on bran, what could he not have accomplished on blood! One thing is certain—at the cosmical banquet where Shaw sits is the head of the table—for him.

When Bernard Shaw told a gaping world that he was only a natural-born mountebank with a cart and a trumpet, a sigh of relief was exhaled in artistic London. So many had been taking him seriously and swallowing his teachings, preachings, and *pronunciamentos,* that to hear the merryman was only shamming came as a species of liberation from a cruel obsession. Without paying the customary critical toll, Shaw had slipped duty free into England all manners of damnable doctrines. What George Moore attempted in a serious manner George Shaw, a fellow-Irishman, succeeded in accomplishing without the *chorale* of objurgation, groans, exclamations of horror, and blasts of puritanical cant. Thus Proudhon, Marx, La Salle, Ibsen, Wagner, Nietzsche, and a lot of free-thinkers in socialism, religion, philosophy, and art, walked unmolested through the pages of critical reviews, while Mr. Moore was almost pilloried for advocating naturalism, while Vizetelly was sent to prison for translating Zola.

After the Shaw criticisms came the novels, then the plays. The prefaces of the latter are literature, and will be remembered with joy when the plays are forgotten. In them the author has distilled the quintessence of Shaw. They will be classics some day, as the Dryden prefaces are classics. Nevertheless, in the plays we find the old Shaw masquerading, this time behind the footlights. He is still the preacher, Fabian debater, socialist, vegetarian, lycanthrope, and normally abnormal man of the early days—though he prides himself on his abnormal normality. Finding that the essay did not reach a wide enough audience, the wily Celt mounts the rostrum and blarneys his listeners something after this manner:—

"Here's my hustings; from here will I teach, preach, and

curse the conventions of society. Come all ye who are tired of the property fallacy! There is but one Karl Marx, and I am his living prophet. Shakespeare must go—Ibsen is to rule. Wagner was a Fabianite; the Ring proves it. Come all ye who are heaven-laden with the moralities! I am the living witness for Nietzsche. I will teach children to renounce the love of parents; parents to despise their offspring; husbands to hate their wives; wives to loathe their husbands; and brothers and sisters will raise warring hands after my words have entered their souls. Whatever is is wrong—to alter Pope. The prostitute classes,—I do not balk at the ugly word,—clergymen, doctors, lawyers, statesmen, journalists, are deceiving you. They speak in divers and lying tongues. I alone possess the prophylactic against the evils of life. Here it is: Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant; and Three Plays for Puritans."

But Shaw only removed another of his innumerable masks. Beware, says Nietzsche, of the autobiographies of great men. He was thinking of Richard Wagner. His warning applies to Bernard Shaw, who is a great comedian and a versatile. He has spoken through so many different masks that the real Shaw is yet to be seen. Perhaps on his death-bed some stray phrase will illuminate with its witty gleam his true soul's nature. He has played tag with this soul so long that some of it has been lost in the game. Irishman born, he is not genial after the Oliver Goldsmith type; he resembles much more closely Dean Swift, minus that man's devouring genius. When will the last mask be lifted—and, awful to relate, will it, when lifted, reveal the secret? A master hypnotist perhaps he may be, illuding the world with the mask idea. And what a comical thing it would be to find him smiling at the end and remarking, "I fooled you, Brethren, didn't I?"

In his many rôles one trait has obstinately remained, the trait of irresistible waggery. Yet we sadly suspect it. What

if this declaration of charlatanism were but a mask! What if Shaw were really sincere! What if he really meant to be sincere in his various lectures and comedies! What if his assumption of insincerity were sincere! His sincerity insincere! The thought confuses. In one of his plays—The Philanderer—a certain character has five or six natures. Shaw again, *toujours* Shaw!

Joke of all jokes, I really imagine that Shaw is a sentimentalist in private! and that he has been so sentimental, romantic, in his youth, that an inversion has taken place in his feelings. Swift's hatred of mankind was a species of inverted lyricism; so was Flaubert's; so may be Shaw's. Fancy him secretly weeping over Jane Eyre, or holding a baby in his lap, or—richest of all fancies—occasionally eating sausage and drinking beer! I met him, once upon a time, in Bayreuth. He spoke then in unmeasured terms of its beer drinkers, and added, without the ghost of a smile, that breweries should be converted into insane asylums.

Whether we take him seriously or not, he is a delightful, an entertaining writer. His facile use, with the aid of the various mouthpieces he assumes at will, of the ideas of Nietzsche, Wagner, Ibsen, and Strindberg, fairly dazzles. He despises wit at bottom, using its forms as a medium for the communication of his theories. Art for art's sake is a contradiction to this writer. He must have a sense of beauty, but he never boasts of it; rather does he seem to consider it something naked, almost shameful—something to be hidden away. So his men are always deriding art, though working at it like devils on high pay. This puritanical vein has grown with the years, as it has with Tolstoy. Only Shaw never wasted his youth in riotous living, as did Tolstoy.

He had no money, no opportunities, no taste. A fierce ascetic and a misogynist, he will have no regrets at threescore and ten; no sweet memories of headaches—he is a

teetotaller; no heartaches—he is too busy with his books; and no bitter aftertaste for having wronged a fellow-being. Behold, Bernard Shaw is a good man, has led the life of a saint, worked like a hero against terrible odds, and is the kindest-hearted man in London. Now we have reached another mask—the mask of altruism. Nearly all his earnings went to the needy; his was, and is, a practical socialism. He never let his right hand know the extent of his charities, and mark this,—no one else knew of it. Yet good deeds, like murder, will out. His associates ceased deriding the queer clothes, the flannel shirt, and the absence of evening dress; his money was spent on others. So, too, his sawdust menu,—his carrots, cabbage, and brown bread,—it did not cost much, his eating, for his money was needed by poorer folk. So you see what a humbug is this dear old Diogenes, who growls cynically at the human race, abhors sentiment-mongers, and despises conventional government, art, religion, and philosophy. He is an arch-sentimentalist, underneath whose frown are concealed tears of pity. Another mask torn away—Bernard Shaw, philanthropist!

He tells us in the preface to Cashel Byron's Profession —which sounds like the title of a Charles Lever novel—that he had a narrow escape from being a novelist at the age of twenty-six. He still shudders over it. He wrote five novels, three of which we know, to wit: Cashel Byron's Profession, An Unsocial Socialist, Love Among the Artists —hideous and misleading title. Robert Louis Stevenson took a great fancy to Cashel Byron and its stunning eulogies of pugilism. It was even dramatized in this country. With Hazlitt and George Meredith (oh! unforgetable prize-fight in The Amazing Marriage) Mr. Shaw praised the noble art of *sluggerei*. The Unsocial Socialist contains at least one act of a glorious farce comedy. He is Early British in his comedic writing. It is none the less capital fun.

This book or tract—it is hardly a novel—contains among other extraordinary things a eulogy of photography that would delight the soul of a Steichen. Shaw places it far above painting because of its verisimilitude! It also introduces a lot of socialistic talk which is very unconvincing; the psycho-physiologist would really pronounce the author a perfect specimen in full flowering of the saintly anarch. There is a rôle played by a character—Shaw?—which recalls Leonard Charteris in a later play, The Philanderer. All of his men are modelled off the same block. They are a curious combination of blackguard, philosopher, "bounder," artist, and comedian. His women! Recall Stevenson's dismayed exclamation at the Shaw women! They are creatures who have read Ibsen; are, one is sure, dowdy; but they interest. While you wonder at the strength of their souls, you do not miss the size of their feet. Mr. Shaw refuses to see woman as a heroine. She is sometimes a breeder of sinners, always a chronicler of the smallest kind of small beer, and for fear this sounds like an Iago estimate, he dowers her with an astounding intellectual equipment, and then lets the curious compound work out its own salvation.

He is much more successful with his servants; witness Bashville in Cashel Byron's Profession, most original of lackeys, and the tenderly funny old waiter in You Never Can Tell, a bitter farce well sprinkled with the Attic salt of irony. Otherwise Mr. Shaw has spent his time tilting at flagellation, at capital punishment, at the abuse of punctuation, at the cannibalistic habit of eating the flesh of harmless animals at Christmas, at Going to Church, extolling Czolgosz—heavens! the list is a league long. His novels as a whole are disappointing, though George Meredith has assured us in the first chapter of Diana that brain stuff in fiction is not lean stuff. But there are some concessions to be made to the Great God Beauty, and these Mr. Shaw has

not seen fit to make. Episodes of brilliancy, force, audacity, there are; but episodes only. The psychology of a musician is admirably set forth in Love Among the Artists, and the story, in addition, contains one of the most lifelike portraits of a Polish *pianiste* that has ever been painted. John Sargent could have done no better in laying bare a soul. Ugliness is rampant—ugliness and brutality. It is all as invigorating as a bath of salt water when the skin is peeled off—it burns; you howl; Shaw grins. He hates with all the vigor of his big brain and his big heart to hear of the infliction of physical pain. He does not always spare his readers. Three hundred years ago he would have roasted heretics, for there is much of the grand inquisitor, the John Calvin, the John Knox, in Shaw. He will rob himself of his last copper to give you food, and he will belabor you with words that assault the tympanum if you disagree with him on the subject of Ibsen, Wagner, or—anything he likes.

Beefsteak, old Scotch ale, a pipe, and Montaigne—are what he needs for one year. Then his inhumane criticism of poor, stumbling mankind's foibles might be tempered. Shaw despises weakness. He follows to the letter Nietzsche's injunction, Be hard! And there is something in him of Ibsen's pitiless attitude toward the majority, which is always in the wrong; yet is, all said and done, the majority. Facts, reality, truth—no Gradgrind ever demanded them more imperiously than Heervater Shaw, whose red beard and locks remind one of Conrad in Die Meistersinger. Earth folk do everything to dodge the facts of life, to them cold, harsh, and at the same time fantastic. Every form of anodyne, ethical, intellectual, æsthetical, is resorted to to deaden the pain of reality. We work to forget to live; our religions, art, philosophy, patriotism, are so many buffers between the soul of man and bitter truth.

Shaw wants the truth at all hazards; his habit of veracity is like that of Gregers's Werle, is shocking. So he dips his

subjects into a bath of muriatic acid and seems surprised at their wrigglings and their screams. "But I don't want to hear the truth!" yells the victim, who then limps back to his comfortable lies. And the one grievous error is that our gallant slayer of dragons, our Celtic Siegfried, does not believe in the illusions of art. Its veils, consoling and beautiful, he will not have, and thus it is that his dramas are amusing, witty, brilliant, scarifying, but never poetic, never beautiful, and seldom sound the deeper tones of humanity. With an artist's brain, he stifles the artist's soul in him—as Ibsen never did. With all his liberalism he cannot be liberal to liberalism, as Gilbert Chesterton so neatly puts it.

The Perfect Wagnerite and The Quintessence of Ibsenism are two supernally clever *jeux d'esprit*. As he reads Shaw and Fabianism into the Ring of the Nibelungs, so his Ibsen is transformed into a magnified image of Shaw dropping ideas from on high with Olympian indifference. This pamphlet, among the first of its kind in English, now seems a trifle old-fashioned in its interpretation of the Norwegian dramatist—possibly because he is something so different from what Mr. Shaw pictured him. We are never shown Ibsen the artist, but always the social reformer with an awful frown. He was a fighter for Ibsen, when in London Ibsen was once regarded as a perverter of morals. Bravery is Bernard's trump card. He never flinched yet, whether answering cat-calls from a first night's gallery or charging with pen lowered lance-fashion upon some unfortunate clerical blockhead who endeavored to prove that hell is too good for sinners.

It is easy to praise Mozart to-day; not so easy to demonstrate the genius of Richard Strauss. Wagner in 1888 was still a bogie-man, a horrid hobgoblin threatening the peace of academic British music. Shaw took up the fight, just as he fought for Degas and Manet when he was an art critic. I still preserve with reverence his sweeping answers

to Max Nordau. It wiped Nordau off the field of discussion.

And the plays! They, too, are controversial. They all prove something, and prove it so hard that presently the play is swallowed up by its thesis—the horse patiently follows the cart. It may not be art, but it is magnificent Shaw. You can skip the plays, not the prefaces. Widowers' Houses is the most unpleasant, ugly, damnably perverse of the ten. The writer had read Ibsen's An Enemy of the People too closely. Its drainpipes, and not its glorification of the individual, got into his brain. It filtered forth bereft of its strength and meaning in this piece, with its nasty people, its stupidities. How could Shaw be so philistine, so much like a vestryman interested in pauper lodgings? In the implacable grasp of Ibsen, this sordid theme would have been beaten on a red-hot anvil until shaped to something of purpose and power. Shaw was not blacksmith enough to swing the Ibsen hammer and handle the Ibsen bellows. He has written me on this subject that if I were a resident of London I would see my way clearer toward liking this play. It is, he asserts, a transcript of the truth—which still leaves my argument on its legs.

The Philanderer, with its irresponsible levity and unexpected contortions, is a comedy of the true Shaw order. It is his Wild Duck, for in it he pokes fun at an Ibsen club, at the New Woman, and the New Sentiment, at almost everything he upholds in other plays and ways. There is a dramatic critic slopping over with British sentiment and other liquids. The women are absolutely incredible. The first act, like most of the Shaw first acts, is the best; best because, in his efforts to get his people going, the dramatist has little time to sermonize. He usually gets the chance later, to the detriment of his structure. The first act of The Philanderer would have made Henri Becque smile. It has something of the Frenchman's mordant irony—and then

you never know what is going to happen. The behavior of the two women recalls a remark of Shaw's apropos of Strindberg; Strindberg, who "shows that the female Yahoo, measured by romantic standards, is viler than her male dupe and slave." Here the conditions are reversed; there is no romance; the dupes are women, and also the Yahoos. The exposure of Julia's soul, poor, mean, sentimental, suffering little creature, withal heroic, would please Strindberg himself. The play has an autobiographic ring.

As to Mrs. Warren's Profession. It was played January 12, 1902, in London, by the Stage Society. Mr. Grein says that Mrs. Warren's Profession is literature for the study. The mother is a bore, wonderfully done in spots (the spots especially) and the daughter a chilly, waspish prig. The men are better; Sir George Crofts and the philandering young fellow could not be clearer expressed in terms of ink. I imagine that in a performance they must be extremely vital. And that weak old *roué* of a clergyman—why is Shaw so severe on clergymen? For the rest, Mrs. Warren's Profession creates a disagreeable impression, as the author intended it should. I consider it his biggest, and also his most impossible, *opus*.

You Can Never Tell, Arms and the Man, Candida, and The Devil's Disciple are a quartet difficult to outpoint for prodigal humor and ingenious fantasy. In London the first named was noted irresistibly funny. It is funny, and in a new way, though the framework is old-fashioned British farce newly veneered by the malicious, the roistering humor of Shaw. Arms and the Man and The Devil's Disciple have been in Mr. Mansfield's repertory for years; they need no comment further than saying that the first has something of the Gilbertian Palace of Truth topsy-turvying quality (Louka is a free paraphrase of Regina in Ghosts, though she talks Shaw with great fluency), with a wholly original content and characterization; and the second is perverse melodrama.

Candida is not for mixed audiences. Christian socialism is caviare to the general. In characterization there is much variety; the heroine—if there be such an anomaly as a Shaw heroine—is most engaging. Every time I read Candida I feel myself on the trail of somebody; it is all in the air. The Lady from the Sea comes back when in that last scene, where the extraordinary young poet Marchbanks, a combination of the spiritual qualities of Shelley, Shaw, Ibsen's Stranger, and Shelley again, dares the fatuous James Morell to put his wife Candida to the test. It is one of the oddest situations in dramatic literature, and it is all "prepared" with infinite skill. The dénouement is another of Mr. Shaw's shower baths; withal a perfectly proper and highly moral ending. You grind your teeth over it, as Mr. Shaw peeps across the top of the page, indulging in one of his irritating dental displays.

The Man of Destiny is a mystification in one act. Napoleon talks the purest Balzac when he describes the English, and Mr. Shaw manipulates the wires industriously. It's good sport of its genre.

Captain Brassbound's Conversion is pure farce. But the joy of Cæsar and Cleopatra is abounding. You chortle over it as chortled Stevenson over the footman. A very devil of a play, one to read after Froude, Michelet, Shakespeare, or Voltaire for the real facts of the case. Since Suetonius, it is the first attempt at true Cæsarean history. And the stage directions out-Maeterlinck Maeterlinck with their elaborate intercalations. The gorgeous humor of it all!

Arms and the Man has been translated into German and played in Germany. What will the Germans say to Cæsar and Cleopatra? They take Shaw too seriously now, which is almost as bad as not taking him seriously at all. What will the doctors of history do when the amazing character of Cleopatra is dissected? If Shaw had never written another line but this bubbling study of antiquity, in which the spirit

of the opera bouffe has not entered, he would be entitled to a free pass to that pantheon wherein our beloved Mark Twain sits enthroned. It is all truth-telling on a miraculous plane of reality, a reality which modulates and merges into fantasy. One almost forgets the prefaces and the notes after reading Cæsar and Cleopatra.

Whether he will ever vouchsafe the world a masterpiece, who can say? Why demand so much? Is not he in himself a masterpiece? It depends on his relinquishment of a too puritanical attitude toward art, life, and roast beef. He is too pious. Never mind his second-hand Nietzsche, his Diabolonian ethics, and his modern version of Carlylean Baphometic Baptisms. They are all in his eye—that absolutely normal eye with the suppressed Celtic twinkle. He doesn't mean a word he utters. (Who does when writing of Shaw?) I firmly believe he says his prayers every night with the family before he goes to his Jaeger-flannel couch!

II

Candida is the very quintessence of her creator. Many prefer this sprightly sermon disguised as a comedy to Mr. Bernard Shaw's more serious works. Yet serious it is. No latter-day paradoxioneer—to coin a monster word, for the Shaws, Chestertons, *et al.*—evokes laughter so easily as the Irishman. His is a cold intellectual wit, a Swiftian wit, minus the hearty and wholesome obscenity of the great Dublin dean. But it is often misleading. We laugh when we should reflect. We laugh when we might better hang our heads—this is meant for the average married and bachelor man. Shaw strikes fire in almost every sentence he puts into Candida's honest mouth. After reading his eloquent tribute to Ibsen, the crooked places in Candida become plainer; her mission is not alone to undeceive but to love; not only to bruise hearts but to heal them.

In a singularly vivid passage on page 38 of The Quintessence of Ibsenism, Mr. Shaw writes: "When Blake told men that through excess they would learn moderation, he knew that the way for the present lay through the Venusberg, and that the race would assuredly not perish there as some individuals have, and as the Puritans fear we all shall unless we find a way round. Also, he no doubt foresaw the time when our children would be born on the other side of it, and so be spared the fiery purgation."

This sentiment occurs in the chapter devoted to a consideration of The Womanly Woman. Let us look at the phrases on the printed page of Candida that might be construed as bearing upon the above, or, rather, the result of the quoted passage.

Candida speaks to James, her husband, in Act II:—

> Don't you understand? I mean, will he forgive me for not teaching him myself? For abandoning him to the bad woman for the sake of my goodness—my purity, as you call it? Ah, James, how little you understand me, to talk of your confidence in my goodness and purity! I would give them both to poor Eugene as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there were nothing else to restrain me. Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that went I should care very little for your sermons—mere phrases that you cheat yourself and others with every day.

Here is one of the most audacious speeches in any modern play. It has been passed over by most English critics who saw in Candida merely an attempt to make a clergyman ridiculous, not realizing that the theme is profound and far-reaching, the question put being no more and no less than: Shall a married man expect his wife's love without working for it, without deserving it? Secure in his conviction that he was a model husband and a good Christian, the Rev. James Mavor Morell went his way smiling and lecturing. He had the "gift of gab," yet he was no humbug; indeed, a sincerer parson does not exist. He is

quite as sincere as Pastor Manders, much broader in his views, and consequently not half so dull.

But he is, nevertheless, a bit of a bore, with his lack of humor and his grim earnestness. No doubt Shaw took his fling at that queer blending of Christianity and socialism, that Karl Marx in a parson's collar which startled London twenty years ago in the person of the Christian socialist clergyman. He saw, too, being a man with a sense of character values and their use in violent contrast, that to the rhapsodic and poetic Eugene Marchbanks, Morell would prove a splendid foil. And so he does. Between this oddly opposed pair stands on her solid, sensible underpinnings the figure of Candida. Realist as is Mr. Shaw, he would scout the notion of his third act being accepted as a transcript from life. For two acts we are in plain earthly atmosphere; unusual things happen, though not impossible ones. In the last act Shaw, droll dramatist and acute observer of his fellow-man's foibles, disappears, only to return in the guise of Shaw the preacher.

And how he does throw a sermon at our heads! The play is arrested in its mid-ocean, and the shock throws us almost off our feet. Do not be deceived. That mock bidding for the hand of Candida, surely the craziest farce ever invented, is but this author's cunning manner of driving home his lesson. Are you worthy of your wife? Is the woman who swore to love and honor you ("obey" is not in the Shaw vocabulary, thanks to J. S. Mill) worthy of you? If your love is not mutual then better go your ways—you profane it! Is this startling? In this novel? No and yes. The defense of love for love's sake, coming from the lips of a Shaw character, has a surprising effect, for no man is less concerned with sex questions, no man has more openly depreciated the ascendancy of sex in art and literature. He would be the first to applaud eagerly Edmund Clarence Stedman's question apropos of Walt Whitman's Leaves of

Grass: Is there no other light in which to view the beloved one than as the future mother of our children? (I trust to a treacherous memory; the meaning is expressed, though not in Mr. Stedman's words.)

Therefore Candida is a large exposition of the doctrine that love should be free,—which is by no means the same thing as free love; that it should be a burden equally borne by both parties in the yoke; that happiness, instead of misery, would result if more women resembled Candida in candor. She cut James to the heart with the confounding of her shawl and personal purity; it was an astounding idea for a clergyman's ears. She proved to him later that she was right, that the hundredth solitary sinner is of more consequence than the ninety-nine reclaimed. Shaw, who is a Puritan by temperament, has, after his master, Ibsen, cracked with his slingstone many nice little glass houses wherein complacent men and women sit and sun their virtues in the full gaze of the world. One of his sharp and disconcerting theories is that women, too, can go through the Venusberg and still reach the heights—a fact always denied by the egotistical man, who wishes to be the unique sinner so that he may receive the unique consolation. After a gay life, a sober one; the reformed rake; Tannhäuser's return to an Elizabeth who awaits him patiently; dear, sweet, virtuous Penelope! Shaw sees through this humbug of the masculine pose and turns the tables by making his Candida ride the horse of the dilemma man-fashion. Maeterlinck, in his Monna Vanna and Joyzelle, enforces the same truth—that love to be love should be free.

And the paradoxical part of it all is that Candida is a womanly woman. She is so domestic, so devoted, that the thin-skinned idealist Eugenie moans over her kitchen propensities. Shaw has said that "the ideal wife is one who does everything that the ideal husband likes, and nothing else," which is a neat and sardonic definition of the woman-

ly woman's duty. Candida demands as her right her husband's trust in her love, not heavenly rewards, not the consciousness of her own purity, not bolts and bars will keep her from going from him if the hour strikes the end of her affection. All of which is immensely disconcerting to the orthodox of view, for it is the naked truth, set forth by a man who despises not orthodoxy, but those who profess it only to practise paganism. This Shaw is a terrible fellow; and the only way to get rid of a terrible fellow is not to take him seriously but to call him paradoxical, entertaining; to throw the sand of flattery in his eyes and incidentally blind criticism at the same time. But Bernard Shaw has always refused to be cajoled, and as to the sand or the mud of abuse—well, he wears the very stout spectacles of common sense.

III

What does Mr. Shaw himself think of Candida? Perhaps if he could be persuaded to tell the truth, the vaporish misconceptions concerning her terrible "shawl" speech—about which I never deceived myself—might be dissipated. It was not long forthcoming—his answer to my question, an answer the publication of which was left to my discretion. It may shock some of his admirers, disconcert others, but at the same time it will clear the air of much cant; for there is the Candida cant as well as the anti-Shaw cant. He wrote me:—

Don't ask me conundrums about that very immoral female, Candida. Observe the entry of W. Burgess: "You're the lady as hused to typewrite for him." "No." "Naaaow: *she* was younger." And therefore Candida sacked her. Prossy is a very highly selected young person indeed, devoted to Morell to the extent of helping in the kitchen but to him the merest pet rabbit, unable to get the slightest hold on him. Candida is as unscrupulous as Siegfried: Morell himself sees that "no law will bind her." She seduces Eugene just ex-

actly as far as it is worth her while to seduce him. She is a woman without "character" in the conventional sense. Without brains and strength of mind she would be a wretched slattern or voluptuary. She is straight for natural reasons, not for conventional ethical ones. Nothing can be more cold-bloodedly reasonable than her farewell to Eugene: "All very well, my lad; but I don't quite see myself at fifty with a husband of thirty-five." It is just this freedom from emotional slop, this unerring wisdom on the domestic plane, that makes her so completely mistress of the situation.

Then consider the poet. She makes a man of him finally by showing him his own strength—that David must do without poor Uriah's wife. And then she pitches in her picture of the home, the onions, and the tradesmen, and the cossetting of big baby Morell. The New York *hausfrau* thinks it a little paradise; but the poet rises up and says, "Out then, into the night with me"—Tristan's holy night. If this greasy fool's paradise is happiness, then I give it to you with both hands, "life is nobler than that." That is the "poet's secret." The young things in front weep to see the poor boy going out lonely and broken-hearted in the cold night to save the proprieties of New England Puritanism; but he is really a god going back to his heaven, proud, unspeakably contemptuous of the "happiness" he envied in the days of his blindness, clearly seeing that he has higher business on hand than Candida. She has a little quaint intuition of the completeness of his cure; she says, "he has learnt to do without happiness."

So here is Shaw on Shaw, Shaw dissecting Candida, Shaw at last letting in light on the mystery of the "poet's secret"! There may be grumbling among the faithful at this very illuminating and sensible exposition, I feel. So thinks Mr. Shaw, for he adds, "As I should certainly be lynched by the infuriated Candidamaniacs if this view of the case were made known, I confide it to your discretion"—which by a liberal interpretation means, publish it and be hanged to you! But "Candidamaniacs"! Oh, the wicked wit of this man who can thus mock his flock! His *coda* is a neat summing up: "I tell it to you because it is an interesting sample of the way in which a scene, which should be conceived and written only by transcending the ordinary notion of the relations between the persons, nevertheless stirs the ordinary emotions to a very high degree, all the more

because the language of the poet, to those who have not the clew to it, is mysterious and bewildering and therefore worshipful. I divined it myself before I found out the whole truth about it."

IV

Some day in the far future, let us hope, when the spirit of Bernard Shaw shall have been gathered to the gods, his popular vogue may be an established fact. Audiences may flock to sip wit, philosophy, and humor before the footlights of the Shaw theatre; but unless the assemblage be largely composed of Shaw *replicas,* of overmen and overwomen ("oversouls," not altogether in the Emersonian sense), it is difficult to picture any other variety listening to Man and Superman. For one thing, it is not a play to be played, though it may be read with delight bordering on despair. A deeper reason exists for its hopelessness —it is such a violent attack on what might be called the Shaw superstructure, that his warmest enemies and chilliest admirers will wonder what it is all about. Even William Archer, one of the latter, confessed his disappointment.

Man and Superman—odious title—is Shaw's new attempt at a Wild Duck, formerly one of Ibsen's most puzzling productions. Shaw mocks Shaw as Ibsen sneered at Ibsen. This method of viewing the obverse of your own medal—George Meredith would say the back of the human slate—is certainly a revelation of mood-versatility, though a disquieting one to the man in the street. It does not seem to be playing fair in the game. Sometimes it is not. With Ibsen it was; he wished to have his fling at the Ibsenite, and he had it. Shaw-like one is tempted to exclaim, Aha! drums and trumpets again, even if the cart be repainted. (*Vide* his earlier prefaces.)

The book is dedicated to Mr. Arthur Bingham Walkley, who once wrote of his friend, "Mr. Bernard Shaw fails as a dramatist because he is always trying to prove something." In the end it is Shaw the man who is more interesting than his plays,—all the characters are so many Shaws winking at one through the printed dialogue.

In the pleasing and unpleasing plays, in the puritanical comedies, his "forewords" were full of meat served up with a Hibernian sauce, which produced upon the mental palate the flavors of Swift, of Nietzsche, of Aristophanes, and of Shaw. This compound could not be slowly degustated, because the stuff was too hot. Velocity is one of Shaw's prime characteristics. Like a pianoforte *virtuoso* whose fingers work faster than his feelings, the Irishman is lost when he essays massive, sonorous *cantilena*. He is as emotional as his own typewriter, and this defect, which he parades as did the fox in the fable, has stood in the way of his writing a great play. He despises love, and therefore cannot appeal deeply to mankind.

In the present preface the old music is sounded, but brassier and shriller; the wires are wearing. It is addressed to Arthur Bingham Walkley, by all odds the most brilliant, erudite, and satisfying of English dramatic critics. Now the cruel thing about this preface is that in it the author tries to foist upon the critic of the London *Times* the penalty attached to writing such a play as Man and Superman. We all cannot be Drydens and write prefaces as great as poems; and Mr. Shaw might have left out either the play or the preface and spared the nerves of his friends. He started out to make a play on Don Juan, an old and ever youthful theme. He succeeded in turning out an amorphous monster, part dream, part sermon, that will haunt its creator as Frankenstein was haunted for the rest of his days. Man and Superman is a nightmare.

To be impertinent is not necessarily an evidence of wis-

dom; nor does the dazzling epigram supply the missing note of humanity. But our author is above humanity. He would deal with the new man who is to succeed the present used-up specimen. We must freeze up, if needs be by artificial process, all the springs of natural instincts. Man must realize that in the inevitable duel of the sexes he will be worsted unless he recognizes that he is the pursued, not the pursuer. In the animal kingdom it is the male that is gorgeously bedizened for the purpose of attracting the feebler faculty of attention in the female. But in the human order the man is the cynosure of the woman. Her whole education and existence is an effort to win him—perhaps not for himself, nevertheless to win and wear him. This is biologically correct, though hardly gallant; and it is as old as Adam and Eve. Henry James once defined the situation succintly, "It was much more the women . . . who were after the men than the men who were after the women; it was literally visible that the general attitude of one sex was that of the object pursued and defensive, apologetic and attenuating. . . ." (In the Cage.)

Mr. Shaw might have added that, unlike lightning, women strike twice in the same spot. Frivolity, however, is not in Mr. Shaw's present scheme of applied Unsociology.

As is the case with most reformers, he has harked back to the past for his future types. His men and women, though they go down to the sea in motor cars, converse about Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, affect twentieth-century modes, are in reality as old as the hills and as savage as hillmen. They are only a trifle more self-conscious. The present play—let us call it one for the sake of the argument—deals with a precious "baggage" named Ann Whitefield. She is, in the words of Ibsen, "a mighty huntress of men." She is pert, very vulgar, quite uncivilized, quite ignorant of every-day feminine delicacies; in a word, the new woman, according to the gospel of Shaw. Her

pursuit of a man, unavowed, bold, is the story of the play. She is hot-footed after a revolutionary socialist, John Tanner. Every word that springs or saunters from his lips, every movement of his muscular person, betrays the breed of Daredevil Dick, of all the revolutionaries in all the Shaw plays—the true breed of which Saint Bernard is himself the unique protagonist. Tanner is rich and believes himself an anarchist. He is mistaken. He is only a Fabianite with cash, a Fabianite who has lost the "shining face" of a neophyte and talks daggers and dynamite, though he uses them not. Ann has been left an orphan. She is a new Hedda Gabler, who knows what she wants, sees it, secures it; therefore she burns no dramatic "children," sends no man to a drunkard's doom; nor will she, one feels quite certain, deceive her husband. To secure him she attempts all the deception before she marries him, and if she seldom succeeds with her white lies she nevertheless bags her game.

To supply these two pleasing persons with characters upon whom they may act and be reacted, Mr. Shaw has devised a middle-aged hypocrite, a whited sepulchre and man of the world, named Roebuck Ramsden; a sap-headed young man who dotes so much on Ann that he sacrifices his own happiness that she may be happy—or humbugs himself into that belief; a self-willed young lady, his sister Violet, who conceals her marriage with evil results to her reputation; a comical low-comedy chauffeur; several pale persons; a snobbish American youth of humble Irish parentage gilded by American wealth; some brigands, a dream Don Juan, and last, but not least, the Devil, who in this case is *not* a gentleman.

The first act is promising. Mr. Shaw's little paragraphs —they are intended as a prompt-book in miniature—are more amusing than his preface. We are deluded into the notion that a first-class comedy is at hand. There are all the materials ready. Ramsden, an "advanced" thinker of

the antiquated Bradlaugh type, has been appointed co-executor, co-guardian with Tanner, a thinker of the latter-day type; that is, a man who has read Marx, Proudhon, Nietzsche, but not Max Stirner. The fair Ann, her mother and sister are the stakes of the game. Octavius, the sap-headed young man, is ready to sacrifice himself, and his sister shocks all by not acknowledging the father of her unborn child. Here is potential stuff for a tragic comedy. But Mr. Shaw will not mould his material into viable shapes. He refuses to be an artist. He loathes art. And so he is punished by fate—his inspiration vanishes almost at the point of execution, and, except for a few fugitive flashes, never burns serenely or continuously.

One telling bit is when Tanner congratulates Violet (what an appropriate name!) on her delicate condition and is scorned by that young person, scorned and snubbed. What—she a wicked woman! No, she is but secretly wedded; in the fulness of time her husband will be revealed. Tanner sneaks away, feeling that not to women must man look for the emancipation of the sexes from conventional notions. There are long harangues on prevailing economic evils, social diseases—all the old Shaw grievances are paraded.

Act II is rather thin. In Act III, which recalls a Gilbertian farce, there are cockney brigands, a bandit corporation, limited, devoted to the robbing of automobiles that pass through Spain. The idea is not sufficiently novel to be funny. A lengthy parabasis, written in genuine Shavian, shows us hell, the Devil, Don Juan, and Anna of Mozartean fame. At least the talk here is as brilliant as is commonly supposed to prevail in the nether regions. *Inter alia,* we read that marriage is the most licentious of human institutions—hence its popularity. Even the Devil is shocked. "The confusion of marriage with morality has done more to destroy the conscience of the human race than any other

single error." "Beauty, purity, respectability, religion, art, patriotism, bravery, and the rest are nothing but words which I or any one else can turn inside out like a glove," continues this relentless rake and transformed preacher. Too true; but the seamy side as exhibited by Don Juan Shaw is not so convincing as in Nietzsche's transvaluation of all values. "They are mere words, useful for duping barbarians into adopting civilization, or the civilized poor into submitting to be robbed and enslaved."

Admitted, keen dissector of contemporary ills; but how about your play? In effect the author says: "To the devil with all art and plays, my play with the rest! What I wish to do is to tell you how to run the universe; and for this I will, if necessary, erect my pulpit in hell!"

After this what more can be said? The play peters out; there is talk, talk, talk. Ann calls the poetic temperament "the old maid's temperament"; the brigand chief sententiously remarks: "There are two tragedies in life: one is not to get your heart's desire; the other is to get it"—which sounds as if wrenched from a page of Chamfort or Rivarol; and Ann concludes with "Go on talking, Tanner, talking!" It is the epitaph of the piece, dear little misshapen, still-born comedy. Well may Mr. Shaw write "universal laughter" at the end. Yet I am willing to wager that some critics will be in tears at this exhibition of perverse waste and clever impotency.

The Revolutionists' Handbook and Pocket Companion, which tops this extraordinary contribution, sociology masking as comedy, is its chiefest attraction. There, petrified into glistening nuggets, may be found Shaw philosophy, Shaw humor. There are maxims, too. "Do *not* unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same." This smacks of the inverted wisdom of the late James Whistler. Marriage, crime, punishment, the beating of children, title, honors, property,

servants, religion, virtues, vices—everything of vital import to thinking men and women is regarded with the charming malevolent eye of Shaw. He exclaims: "Property, said Proudhon, is theft. This is the only perfect truism that has been uttered on the subject." Come, come, Bernard Shaw! Proudhon said it, but the speech was not his own property. You, who know your social classics so well, should have remembered Brissot's Philosophical Examination of Property and Theft, only published in 1780! You also say, "Beware the man whose God is in the skies," and "Every man over forty is a scoundrel." Tut, tut! Why not add—all girls over fifty should be drowned? It is just as logical. But can one condense the cosmos in a formula?

The general impression of the book causes us to believe there is a rift in the writer's lute; not in his mentality, but in his own beliefs, or scepticisms. Perhaps Shaw no longer pins his faith to Shaw. Ibsen asserts that after twenty years a truth that has outlived its usefulness is no longer *truth,* but the simulacrum of one. Shaw's truths may be decaying. We feel sure that if they be, he will be the first to detect the odor and warn away his public. Some years ago he printed a pamphlet against anarchy and anarchist, which was to be expected from a mild, frugivorous man. Now he seems to be wearying of the milk-white flag of socialism; and yet his revolutionary maxims are maxims for children in the time of teething. The world has moved since the Fabian society scowled at the British lion and tried to twist its tail with the dialectics of moderate socialism. To use Mr. Shaw's own pregnant remark, "Moderation is never applauded for its own sake"; and: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." Fabianism taught, taught moderation! Yet to-day the real thing is not Elisée Reclus, but Michael Bakounin; not Peter Kropotkin, but Sergei Netschajew; not Richard Wagner, but his friend, Roeckel, who was sent by him across the cannon-shattered barricades at

Dresden in 1849 to fetch an ice to the thirsty composer. Wagner rang the alarm bells on this opera bouffe and escaped to Switzerland, Bakounin and Roeckel remained and went to prison!

Shaw is still ringing alarm bells, but somehow or other their music is missing and carries no message to his listeners. Is it possible that he regrets the anarchy that he has never had the courage to embrace and avow? A born anarchist, individualist, revolutionist, he has always gone in for half-hearted measures of reform. Never, like Bakounin, has he applied the torch, thrown the bomb; never, like Netschajew, has he dared to pen a catechism of destruction, a manual of nihilism so terrific that advanced Russian thinkers shudder if you mention its title. It is even rumored that the Irish dramatist serves his parish as a meek citizen should—he will be writing poetry or melodrama next. His pessimism is temperamental, not philosophical, like that of most pessimists, as James Sully has pointed out. And instead of closely observing humanity, after the manner of all great dramatists, he has only closely studied Bernard Shaw.

"Regarded as a play, Man and Superman is, I repeat, primitive in invention and second rate in execution. The most disheartening thing about it is that it contains not one of those scenes of really tense dramatic quality which redeemed the squalor of Mrs. Warren's Profession, and made of Candida something very like a masterpiece." Thus William Archer.

V

Most modestly Mr. Shaw entitles a farce of his, the celebrated drama in two tableaux and in blank verse,—The Admirable Bashville, or Constancy Unrewarded. It is nothing else but the story of Cashel Byron's Profession put into

blank verse, because, as Mr. Shaw says, blank verse is so much easier to write than good prose. It is printed at the end of the second edition of the prize-fighting novel. As there has been a dramatization made—unauthorized—for a well-known American pugilist-actor, Mr. Shaw thought that he had better protect his English interests. Hence the parody for copyright purposes which was produced in London the summer of 1903 by the Stage Society at the Imperial Theatre. It is funny. It gibes at Shakespeare, at the modern drama, at Parliament, at social snobbery, at Shaw himself, and almost everything else within reach. The stage setting was a mockery of the Elizabethan stage, with two venerable beef-eaters in Tower costume, who hung up placards bearing the legend, "A Glade in Wiltstoken Park," etc. Ben Webster as Cashel Byron and James Hearn as the Zulu King carried off the honors. Aubrey Smith, made up as Mr. Shaw in the costume of a policeman with a brogue, caused merriment, especially at the close, when he informed his audience that the author had left the house. And so he had. He was standing at the corner when I accosted him. Our interview was brief. He warned me in grave accents and a twinkling Celtic eye never again to describe him as "benevolent." Half the beggars of London had winded the phrase and were pestering him at his back gate. Mr. Shaw still looks as if a half-raw beefsteak and a mug of Bass would do him a world of good. But who can tell? He might then lose some of his effervescence—that quality of humor so happily described by Edmund Gosse when he spoke of the *vegetable* spirits of George Bernard Shaw.

The new play, John Bull's Other Island, was first played in London by the Stage Society last November. It is said —by Shaw's warmest enemies—to be witty, entertaining, and dramatically boneless. There is no alternative now for Mr. Shaw—he must visit America, lecture, and become

rich. It is the logical conclusion of his impromptu career, for it was first in America that the Shaw books and plays were successful and appreciated; the plays largely because of the bold efforts of Arnold Daly and Winchell Smith, two young dramatic revolutionists. And Mr. Shaw may rediscover America for the Americans!

II

AUGUST STRINDBERG

To search for God and to find the Devil! that is what happened to me.—STRINDBERG'S *Inferno.*

A critic is a man who expects miracles. So it has become the general practice to ignore a poet in his totality and seek only for isolated traits. And then the trouble we take to search for what a man is not: the lack of humor in Shelley, the lack of spirituality in Byron, the lack of sanity in Nietzsche, the lack of melody in Richard Strauss! The case of Johann August Strindberg has also proved tempting to critical head-hunters. Long before we read his books we knew of his neurasthenia, and after his reputation as a many-sided man of genius had been established in Europe his matrimonial affairs were employed as an Exhibit A to divorce him from public and critical favor. And yet this poet, romancer, and novelist, who has created such a profusion of types as to be called "The Shakespeare of Sweden," this more than countryman of Swedenborg in his powers of intense vision, this seer and chemist, possesses such a robust, tangible personality that the world is hardly to be censured for being curious about the man before studying his works.

His stock stems from the very soil of Sweden. In the seventeenth century his ancestors were living in the little village of Strinne. Tremendous in physique and intermingled with clerical strains, Strindberg inherits both his big frame and sensitive conscience from his mixed forebears. His is the sanguine scepticism like that of Renan, Anatole France, Barrès, Bernard Shaw, as René Schickele has suggested. A simple pagan he is not; nor would his particular

case have been so complicated. His lyric pessimism and his gift of distilling his bitter experiences into a tale or a play are to-day merged in the broad currents of his historical dramas and socialistic novels. Even his misogyny has become ameliorated,—those episodes in which are crystallized the petty misery of a married couple,—unpaid debts, unloved children, the bailiff knocking at the back door!—let us believe that they, too, were but a phase of his development. Played in Germany and France,—Zola hailed his play, Married, as remarkable, and its author as a *confrère,*—popular in Russia, recognized though not without many years of unjust probation, Strindberg may be said to have achieved what he set out to do,—"to search for God and find the devil," and once more to find his God.

Herr Emil Schering, the devoted German translator of Strindberg, related to me this anecdote. On the writing-desk of Ibsen there stands, or stood, a photograph of Strindberg the Swede, once Ibsen's foe. To a visitor's surprise, Ibsen, after gazing in silence for some time at the picture, said, "There is one who will be greater than I."

Whether this story be true or not Strindberg is a man of genius, a crazy one at times, fascinating as a writer and interesting as a psychiatric study. And he answers to the chief test of the dramatist—he is a prime creator of character. Edmund Gosse pronounced him to be "certainly the most remarkable creative talent started by the philosophy of Nietzsche"; and in speaking of his novel, Inferno, he says that it "is a record of wretchedness and superstition and squalor, told by a maniac who is a positive Lucifer of the intellect . . . in France not only has he a large following, but he exercises a positive influence." Yet this erratic man has planned technical revolutions for the dramatic stage—on the mechanical as well as the spiritual side—that are as startling as were Richard Wagner's in the music drama. It is not necessary here to describe his scheme for present-

ing his long historical dramas without a change of front scene.

Strindberg is a man with an abnormal emotional temperament which he has often allowed to master his judgment. If he had been a composer, while his symphonies would have undoubtedly provoked abuse, they would not have scandalized moralists—such is the peculiar vagueness of that art in the domain of articulate thought. Some day the tone-symbols of music will become a part of our consciousness, and then we may confidently expect arrests, prosecutions, transportations, perhaps executions. Luckily for the bold and imaginative thinkers, music remains the only art, the last sanctuary wherein originality may reveal itself in the face of fools and not pierce their mental opacity.

August Strindberg is a name little known to the English stage or reading public. Yet his dramatic work dates back to 1872, when Meister Olaf was composed. In this youthful essay he anticipated by seven years the Nora type presented by Ibsen. His first novel appeared in 1879, and in 1884, when Giftas was published, the stories in this violent book nearly sent him to the Stockholm jail. It was 1888 before Gräfin Julie was put forth, and this play, originally in three acts, brought Strindberg European fame. Gläubiger, in 1889, confirmed the first critical impression that a writer and thinker of a high order was come. Strindberg's career has been a disordered one. Poverty interrupted his studies at the Upsala University, made him a "super" in a theatre, and drove him to journalism, and to become a doctor's assistant. Always unhappy in his relation with women, often quite mad, and usually living on the treacherous borderland of hallucination, his existence has been fevered and miserable, though his successes are brilliant. Sanity has not been his cardinal quality—he has more than once gone to the asylum, emerging in a few months cured, and, remarkable as it sounds, remembering

the details of his mania. *Détraqué*, sick and cracked, he nevertheless plunged into the study of chemistry, searching for a universal solvent—a mad dream that would interest Balzac. Ideas almost consumed the brain of this *cerebral.*

But hard work calmed his nerves, as was the case with Dostoïevsky. Strindberg's scientific investigations are full of the flashes of divination that at times lend value to the theories of imaginative men. He has written an Introduction à une Chimie unitaire, which was favorably received. It was a conclusion foregone that his impulsive and overwrought emotional nature would lead him into extravagances. Inferno and the double drama, Nach Damaskus, reveal his eroticism, his exasperated imagination, his harsh atheism. He has confessed in one of his autobiographical outpourings—for he lays bare his soul with the same naïveté as did Tolstoy and Rousseau—that in his youth he was a believer, that the modulation to free-thinking and rank atheism was an easy one. Then, after a period of turbulence, he became the dispassionate ponderer; and finally socialism, with its remote horizons, its heroisms, its substitution of humanity for the old gods, caught his wandering soul.

He lives no longer in Paris, a whirlpool for a man of his nature, and since his third marriage, to Harriet Bosse, the popular Swedish actress, called by her admirers the "Scandinavian Duse," he has resided in Stockholm. There his great historical plays have been heard and praised and abused; there he shows in his later writings a mystic strain; there last autumn after some years of exaltation he agreed to separate from his wife, for the clash of two such opposing temperaments "hindered their free development"—so says his faithful biographer. The separation caused much commotion in artistic and dramatic circles. It was, however, a perfectly amicable one; Harriet Bosse declared that

she needed more liberty, for she hopes to travel throughout Europe. A laudable ambition. Strindberg, notwithstanding his unhappy unions, is a stanch monogamist, and allowed the woman to go her way. He has already drawn her portrait in the powerful historical play Christine. Therein the soul of the actress is set before us as the counterfeit Queen of Sweden; winning and masculine, flattering and harsh, a heartless demon and a tender maiden begging for sympathy; anon a mocking tyrant, a wild cat, a second Messalina. It would appear that the poet lost no time in studying Fru Strindberg's characteristics. She, on her side, had made a contract with her manager not to appear in any of her husband's plays, though she has enjoyed triumphs in Fräulein Julie and Samum. Perhaps this was the first little rift in the domestic lute.

Biologists believe that after forty a man of genius—who is in Darwinian parlance a *sport*—returns to his tribe; resumes in himself the traits of his parents. Perhaps Strindberg has reached the grand climacteric and may give us less disturbing masterpieces. In 1902, under the title of Elf Einakter, a German translation of eleven of his one-act plays was published. This collection contains the ripest offering thus far of his unquestionable genius. It begins with Gräfin Julie, condensed by the dramatist into a one-act piece. "A tragedy of naturalism," he calls it. It is an emotional bombshell. The social world seems topsy-turvied after a first reading. After a second, while the gripping power does not relax, one realizes the writer's deep, almost abysmal knowledge of human nature. Imagine a Joseph Andrews made love to by a Lady Booby, youthful, fascinating. But Fielding aims light shafts of satire; Strindberg calls up ghosts with haunting eyes. Passion there is, and a horrible atmosphere of reality. You know the affair has happened; you see the valet, Jean, chucking his cook-sweetheart under the chin as she feeds him with dainties in the

kitchen; you witness the appearance on the scene of Julie enamoured; frantic, unhappy Julie; and you view the crumbling of her soul, depicted as in one of those drawings of Giulio Romano from which you avert your head. The finale makes Ghosts an entertainment for urchins.

Everything is brought about naturally, inevitably. Be it understood, Strindberg is never pornographic, nor does he show a naked soul merely to afford charming diversion, which is the practice of some French dramatists.

What would our Ibsen-hating critics say after Gräfin Julie or Gläubiger! That kitchen—fancy a kitchen as a battlefield of souls!—with its good-hearted and pious cook, the impudent scoundrel of a valet eager for revenge on his superiors, and the hallucinated girl from above stairs—it is a tiny epic of hatred, of class against mass.

Julie is neurotic. She has coolly snapped the bethrothal vows made with a titled young man of the district. It is St. John's Eve. The villa of the Count, Julie's father, is empty save for the two servants, Jean and Christina—the latter is the cook. Julie, bored by her colorless life and fevered by a midsummer's madness, throws herself at the valet's head. He is frightened. His servant nature has the upper hand until the pair, forced to hide because of the intrusion of rough country folk, reappear. Then the male brute is smirking, triumphant. Justin Huntly McCarthy made a translation of the piece for an English magazine in 1892. Here is an excerpt:—

[Julie *enters, sees the disorder in the kitchen, and clasps her hands. Then she takes a powder puff and powders her face.*]

Jean. [*Enters excited*] There, you see and you hear. Do you still think it possible to remain here?

Julie. No, I do not. But what shall we do?

Jean. Fly; travel; fly away from here.

Julie. Travel? Yes! But where?

Jean. To Switzerland, to the Italian lakes. Have you ever been there?

JULIE. No. Is it beautiful?

JEAN. An eternal summer. Orange trees, laurels—ah!

JULIE. But what shall we do there afterwards?

JEAN. We will start a first-class hotel for first-class guests.

JULIE. A hotel!

JEAN. That is the life to live, believe me. Always new faces, new languages, not a moment's leisure for worrying or dreaming, no seeking after employment, for work comes of itself. Night and day the bell rings, the trains whistle, the omnibuses come and go while the gold pieces roll into the till. That is a life to live.

JULIE. That is a life to live. And what of me?

JEAN. You shall be the mistress of the house, the ornament of the firm. With your appearance and your manners we are sure of a colossal success. You sit like a queen in the office and set your slaves in motion with one touch on the electric bell; the guests march past your throne and lay their treasures humbly on the table. You cannot imagine how people tremble when they get a bill. I will salt the accounts and you will sugar them with your most bewitching smile. Yes, let us travel far from here. [*He takes a time-table from his pocket.*] Good. By the next train we are in Malmö at 6.30, in Hamburg at 8.40 to-morrow morning, from Frankfort to Basle in one day, and we are in Como by the St. Gothard route in, let me see, three days. Three days!

JULIE. That is all very fine. But, Jean, you must give me courage. Say that you love me. Come and take me in your arms.

JEAN. [*Hesitating*] I would like to, but I dare not. Not here in this house. I love you without doubt. Can you doubt it?

JULIE. You! Say "thou" to me. Between us there are no longer any barriers. Say "thou."

JEAN. [*Troubled*] I cannot. There are still barriers between us so long as we remain in this house. It recalls the past, it recalls the Count. I have never met any man who compelled such respect from me. I have only to see his glove lying on a table to feel quite small. I have only to hear his bell and I start like a shying horse. And when I look at his boots standing there so stiff and stately, it makes me shiver. [*He pushes the boots away with his foot.*] Superstition, prejudice, which has been driven into us from childhood, but which we can never get free of. If you will only come into another country, into a republic, then people shall kneel down before my porter's livery, people shall kneel down. But I shall not kneel down. I am not born to kneel, for there is stuff in me; there is character in me; and if once I reach the lowest branch, you shall watch me climb. To-day I am a lackey, but next year I am a proprietor; in a few years I shall have an income, and then I run off to Roumania, where I buy a decoration. I can—mark well that I say can—die a count.

JULIE. Beautiful, beautiful!

JEAN. Ah, in Roumania a man can buy a count's title, and then you will be a countess, my countess.

JULIE. What do I care for what I have cast aside! Say that you love me, or else—ah, what am I else?

JEAN. I will say it a thousand times—later on. But not here. And above all, no hysterics, or all is lost. We must manage the affair quietly, like sensible people. [*He takes out a cigar, cuts the end, and lights it.*] Sit down there, and I will sit here, and then we can chat as if nothing had happened.

JULIE. Oh, my God! Have you no feelings?

JEAN. I! why, there is no one more sensitive than I, but I can command my feelings.

JULIE. A short time ago you would have kissed my shoe, and now—

JEAN. [*Coldly*] Yes, before. But now we have something else to think about.

The scamp sounds her as to the money she possesses. She has none. He compels her to rob her father. He kills her bird. She curses him, for her poor brain is going under from the strain put upon it. She throws herself upon the mercy of the cook; but Christina, who is a good woman, repels and rebukes the sinner. The Count returns. He rings. Jean again becomes the servant, though not until he has given Julie his razor, bidding her use it. She goes out and kills herself, unable to resist the stronger will.

In this shocking drama is crystallized all the bitterness of Strindberg, for he once married a Countess; he, too, has lived in the *Inferno*. Again we say the ending revolts; in comparison, the *coda* of Ibsen's Ghosts is a mild exercise in emotional *arpeggios*. Strindberg's heavy fist smashes out music, sinister and murderous, in this ruthless play.

Julie is a close study of a girl whose blood is tainted before birth, whose education has been false, whose life in society has inflamed her passions. She falls easily when the cunning Jean tempts her at the psychologic moment. I saw Julie at the Kleines Theatre, Berlin, last autumn, Frau Eysoldt—Sorma suffering from a bruised arm—assuming

the title rôle, deciphering with skill the abnormal hieroglyphics of the character.

In Gläbiger, a tragic comedy, Strindberg treats, with his accustomed omniscience, a sweet little story about a man who follows his runaway wife to a seaside resort and becomes acquainted with the new husband—unknown to the lady, who is away for a week. Here we catch a glimpse of another hell, the cruelty of a powerful intellect. The weaker man is a painter, turned sculptor, and—subtle irony—he models only his wife's figure. (This was published in 1889; Ibsen certainly read it—witness When We Dead Awake.) The snaring of the poor emotional wretch's soul is masterly. It is all over in an hour, the entire play, and again we feel as if we had mutely assisted at the obsequies of three human beings.

The first husband—who is discovered as such at the end of the play—meets his former wife, and her infamous nature is exposed. The artist hears the conversation, and his fate is not to be spoken of lightly. We pass on.

Paria is after a tale of Ola Hansson. It need not detain us. Poe is a child compared to Strindberg in the analysis of morbid states of soul. Samum is a shuddering ode to revenge. Finally we arrive at Die Stärkere, which met with such acclaim on the Continent. Its chief device of having one silent figure and making the other do the talking is sufficiently novel. But it is again the drama, always the drama with Strindberg. His picture, executed by a kindred and sympathetic interpreter, Edvard Munch, shows the face of one who, like Dante, has seen the nethermost hell.

Played by two artistic actresses, this sardonic little sketch, replete with irony, malice, hatred,—yet full of humanity,—would prove most attractive. It has many sly strokes of humor. The scene of the action is a café on Christmas Eve. Madame X talks to Mademoiselle Y, who remains absolutely silent, yet by glances and gestures con-

trives to send the other woman scudding along the road from idle, amenable chatter to outrageous recrimination. The two women love the same man. Madame X is his wife. Ferociously she exposes her secrets. Her husband at first has forced her to imitate Mademoiselle Y. But she is now the stronger. She has made him forget his early love, who sits in a dreary café alone on Christmas Eve, while she, his legal wife, will go home to the father and children! It is an ugly episode. In Das Band we reach a play revealing the better characteristics of the poet. It consists only of a court-room scene with jurymen, judge, and officers before whom a husband and wife make their petition for divorce—according to Scandinavian procedure. They are resolved to separate; but there is a child, a son, beloved by both. With this elemental stuff as a subject, Strindberg wrings the heart of you. At the end the parents damn themselves by their own admission, the child is taken from their custody, and they confront each other in the deserted, dim court room, their hearts bursting, their future a foggy, abandoned field. They recall the poet Aldrich's picture of No-man's land, where the soul sees its double, a *doppelgänger*.

"And who are you?" cried one agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light;
"I know not," said the second shape,
"I only died last night."

These two souls in the play, once hooked by the steels of marriage and parenthood, realize as they fall loathingly asunder that they are dead, that their life has passed on into the soul of their miserable boy. It is such a play as this that vindicates Strindberg's claim to the mastery of the drama. Here he is at his human best, freed from the bizarre, and his humor and wit illuminate the ghastly darkness with friendly flashes. The jurymen are excellent, and more comical still are the court officers. Many touches throughout

would make the translation and performance of Das Band profitable. And not once is the child on the stage. Possibly, as America is a divorce-loving nation, it would reject with indignation the sight of so many bleaching family bones!

Mit dem Feuer Spielen is a comedy of a drastic kind. It shows Nietzsche's influence. The sister of Nietzsche, Frau Förster-Nietzsche, once assured me in Weimar that her brother enjoyed reading Strindberg's novels. And there are several references to Strindberg in the published correspondence of George Brandes and Nietzsche.

Debit and Credit also proves that, consciously or unconsciously, Strindberg is a Nietzschean. It is a rogue's comedy with original variations. The chief character evokes laughter, for through the grim and sordid rifts in the plot —it pictures a tawdry great man—we hear bursts of natural fun. There is humor, kindly and mocking. Very Shawlike, except that it was written in 1892, is Mutterliebe. In Mrs. Warren's Profession, Mr. Shaw expanded the same gruesome idea. Elsewhere the Irish writer calls Strindberg "the only living genuine Shakespearian dramatist." Strindberg in his fifteen pages traverses a lifetime, and his ending is logical.

In the preface to Fräulein Julie, Strindberg makes a general confession—for him as for Tolstoy a psychologic necessity. "Some people," he says, "have accused my tragedy of being too sad, as though one desired a merry tragedy. People call authoritatively for the Joy of Life, and theatrical managers call for farces, as though the Joy of Life consisted in being foolish, and in describing people who each and every one are suffering from St. Vitus's dance or idiocy. I find the joy of life in the powerful, terrible struggle of life; and the capability of experiencing something, of learning something, is a pleasure to me. And therefore I have chosen an unusual but instructive subject; in other

words, an exception, but a great exception, that will strengthen the rules which offend the apostles of the commonplace. What will further create antipathy in some is the fact that my plan of action is not simple, and that there is not one view alone to be taken of it. An event in life—and this is rather a new discovery—is usually accompanied by a series of more or less deep-seated motives; but the spectator usually generally chooses that one which his power of judgment finds simplest to grasp, or that his gift of judgment considers the most honorable. For example, some one commits suicide: 'Bad business!' says the citizen; 'Unhappy love!' says the woman; 'Sickness!' the sick man; 'Disappointed hopes!' the bankrupt. But it may be that none of these reasons is the real one, and that the dead man hid the real one by pretending another that would throw the most favorable light on his memory."

The Father (produced in 1887 and translated into English by N. Erichsen) is in three short acts. It depicts the destruction of a man's brain through the machinations of his malevolent wife. Strindberg's misogyny is the key-note of his early work. He hates woman. He accuses Ibsen of gynolatry. "My superior intelligence revolts," he cries, "against the gynolatry which is the latest superstition of the free-thinkers." His own married life was so unhappy that he revenges himself by attacking the entire sex. Every book, every play, is a confession. He is the most subjective dramatist and poet of his age. In Comrades he synthesizes the situation:—

To wish to dethrone Man and replace him by Woman—going back to a matriarchy—to dethrone the true master of creation, he who has created civilization and given to the vulgar the benefit of his culture; he who is the generator of great thoughts, of the arts and crafts, of everything, indeed; to dethrone him, I say, in order to elevate "les sales bêtes" of women, who have never taken part in the work of civilization (with a few futile exceptions), is to my mind a provocation to

my sex. And at the idea of seeing "arrive" these anthropomorphs, these half apes, this horde of half-developed animals, these women whose intellects are of the age of bronze, the male in me revolts. I feel myself stirred by an angry need of resisting this enemy, inferior in intellect, but superior by her complete absence of moral sense.

In this war to the death between the two sexes it would appear that the less honest and more perverse would come out conqueror, since the chance of man's gaining the battle is very dubious, handicapped as he is by an inbred respect for woman, without counting the advantages that he gives her in supporting her and leaving her time free to equip herself for the fight.

This sex-against-sex manifesto will not make him popular in America, a land peopled with gynolatrists; but his plays and novels may be read with profit; if nothing else, they illustrate the violent rebound of the pendulum in Scandinavia, where the woman question absorbed all others for a time. Besides, Strindberg is a good hater, and good haters are rare and stimulating spectacles.

Inferno is the very quintessence of Strindberg. Written between two attacks—his unstable nerves send him at intervals into retreat—it is the most awful portrayal of mental suffering ever committed to paper. Poe said in one of his Marginalia that the man who dared to write the story of his heart would fire the paper upon which he wrote. This Strindberg has dared to do with a freedom, a diabolical minuteness, that make the naïve stutterings of Verlaine and the sophisticated confessions of Huysmans mere literature. Because of their intensity you are forced to believe Strindberg, though his is only too plainly a pathologic case; the delusions of persecution, of grandeur, of almost the entire lyre of psychiatric woes, are to be detected in this unique book. An enemy, a Russian, haunts him in Paris and plays on the piano poisonous music which warns the listener that he is doomed. It is the history of Strindberg's quarrel with the Polish poet mystic and dramatist, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, who really tracked the Swede because he was jealous

of his own wife. Strindberg once wrote of Maupassant's La Horla, "I recognize myself in that, and do not deny that insanity has developed."

Margit is a five-act drama, with the sub-title La Femme du Chevalier Bengt. It is a historical play of the times of the Reformation, and it is modern in its glacial analysis of the feminine soul. The picture is more various than is the case with the eternal monologue or dialogues of his shorter pieces—and there is humor of a deadly kind. In Das Geheimnis der Gilde (1879–80) the theme of Ibsen's The Master Builder was anticipated. To enumerate the works of Strindberg would consume columns; Herr Schering of Berlin has literally devoted his life to the task of translating them. Already there are forty volumes of plays, tales, novels, essays, monographs, poems, fables. Even in these times of piping versatility, the many-sided activities of the Swede amaze. His Nach Damaskus reveals a tendency to drift Romeward, to that Roman church, the sanctuary for souls weary of the conflict. There is no denying the fact that Strindberg's later productions show a cooler head, steadier nerves, though the motives are usually madness or blood guilt. The latest volume at the time of writing is devoted to three plays,—Die Kronbraut, Schwanenweiss, Ein Traumspiel. Two of these are powerful and painful. The playwright paints the peasantry of his country with the sombre brush of Hauptmann. Ein Traumspiel is that wonderful thing, a real dream put before us with all the wild irrelevancies of a dream, yet with sober and convincing art. As a stage piece it would be superbly fantastic. Strindberg has a faculty, which he shares in common with E. T. W. Hoffmann and Edgar Poe, of catching the ghosts of his brain at their wildest and pinning them down on paper. In such moods he may be truly called a seer. Swedenborg alone equals him in the veracity and intensity of his visions.

These later plays were admittedly composed during the

few happy years with his third wife, Fru Strindberg Bosse. Edwin Björkman, who has written with authority of his fellow-countryman, declares that "the motives that move Strindberg are moral."

"One of his favorite doctrines," continues Mr. Björkman, "is that social and individual purity is the only solid foundation for physical and mental health, as well as an indispensable condition of true achievement. He speaks somewhere of an artist 'who was yearning for the summit of ambition without being willing to pay the price required of those who are to reach it.'" And then he adds, "The only choice left us by life is between the laurel and our pleasure."

Further he quotes the dramatist, "I let myself be carried away by the heat of the battle [over the woman's emancipation movement, of which he was at that time the only prominent literary antagonist in the Scandinavian countries], and I went so far beyond the limits of propriety that my countrymen feared I had become insane."

An alchemist, a dabbler in spiritualism, a wanderer among the lowly long before Gorky was heard of, Strindberg once wrote to a friend when lack of money kept him a practical prisoner on a small island outside of Stockholm, although his writing-desk was housing the completed manuscripts of six one-act plays and two larger dramas, "I am thinking of becoming a photographer in order to save my talent as a writer."

A later novel is autobiographic. Einsam was published in 1903. It is more reflective than his other books and betrays the loneliness of the returned exile. It registers the poet's dissatisfaction with Lund, to which he went after the tremendous experiences from 1894 to 1898. A most startling play, one of my favorites, is Totentauz. It is a double drama, the shabby hero of which would have pleased the creator of Captain Costigan. His novel Die Gotischen

Zimmer (1904) is of socialistic character and contains many eloquent pages. As he was born January 22, 1849, in Stockholm, it will be seen that this erratic man is beginning to reach the cooling period of his genius.

The most vivid of his books, after Inferno, is The Confessions of a Fool (Die Beichte eines Thoren). Strindberg's wife, to marry him, had divorced herself from a baron. Yet the suspicious writer accused her of all the crimes in the calendar. And he also admits that he abused her. Strindberg was suffering from *paranoia simplex chronica,* according to Dr. William Hirsch, whose valuable work, Genius and Degeneration, contains a study of the Swede's case. What is of peculiar interest is the symptom in his malady called "referential ideas." "The patients," says Dr. Hirsch, "refer all that goes on about to themselves. They suspect that the world is leagued against them." For example: when Strindberg first read Ibsen's Wild Duck, he immediately thought the whole piece was intended for him and was only written on his account. He expressed himself as follows:—

> It was a drama of the famous Norwegian spy, the inventor of the equality madness. How the book fell into my hands I could not say. But now everything was clear and gave occasion to the worst suspicions concerning the reputation of my wife. The plot of the drama was as follows: A photographer (a nickname I had earned by my novels drawn from real life) has married a person of doubtful repute, who had been formerly the mistress of a great proprietor. The woman supports the husband from a secret fund which she derives from her former partner. In addition, she carries on the business of her husband, a good-for-nothing, who spends his time drinking in the society of persons of no consequence. Now that is a misrepresentation of the facts committed by the reporters. They were informed that Maria [Strindberg's wife] made translations, but they did not know that it was I who particularly corrected them and paid over to her the sums received for them. Matters become bad when the poor photographer discovers that the adored daughter is not his child, and that the wife warned him when she induced him to marry her. To complete his disgrace, the husband consents to accept a large sum as

indemnity. By this I understand Maria's loan upon the baron's security, which I endorsed after my wedding. . . . I prepared a great scene for the afternoon. I wished to catch Maria in cross-examination, to which I wished to give the form of a defence for us both. We had been equally attracted by the scarecrow of the masculinists, who had been paid for the pretty job.

To show how mad were his conclusions it is only necessary to add that he does not resemble in the least the selfish idealist, Hjalmar Ekdal, in The Wild Duck, who never works unless he has to, while Strindberg's literary labors have been enormous. Nor is it conceivable that the baroness, Madame Strindberg, furnished Ibsen with the documents for the portrait of the delightful Gina Ekdal. That woman was drawn from the people. Furthermore, to call Ibsen "the inventor of the equality madness" is absolutely a misstatement of a fact, as Ibsen has been a despiser of democracy and all forms of equality.

With an almost infinite capacity for suffering, let us hope that this great, bruised soul has found surcease from its mental suffering, found some gleams of consolation, in his calmer years—until his next psychical hegira. In rebelling against his existence, in refusing to accept the wisdom of the experienced, Strindberg has suffered intensely because his is an intense temperament. But he is a "culture hero," he has "proved all things," and even from his hell he has brought us the history of experiences not to be forgotten. One is tempted to credit the alleged utterance of Ibsen, "Here is one who will be greater than I!"

III

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM

"In life," said Barbey d'Aurevilly, "we are strangled between two doors, of which the one is labelled *Too Soon* and the other *Too Late*." The brilliant Beau Brummel of French literature who uttered this fatidical speech was a contemporary of the unhappy, impulsive man of genius, poet, mystic, and dramatist, who set Paris agog with his novels, short stories, plays, his half-crazy conduct, his epigrams, his fantastic litigations, and his cruel death—Villiers de l'Isle Adam. The bosom friend of Charles Baudelaire and Richard Wagner, petted at Bayreuth, fêted in Paris, nevertheless he died in want, was buried by his friends, and was proud, lonely, aristocratic to the very end—a death from cancer.

His life furnishes material for one of his ironic, bitter, disturbing tales. Born in Brittany, November 28, 1838, he died at Paris in a religious hospital, August 19, 1889. A fierce, even militant, Roman Catholic—he dedicated a book to the Pope—he shocked his coreligionists by the confusing mixture of fanatical piety and fantastic blasphemy which winds through his bizarre works. He is best known to Americans by the story in his Contes Cruels, entitled, The Torture by Hope, which recalls Poe at his best, the Poe of The Pit and the Pendulum. His little play, The Revolt, was translated and first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review,* December, 1897. Arthur Symons has translated a poem, Aveu, and Vance Thompson, in the defunct pages of *Mlle. New York,* wrote often of the celebrated Frenchman.

The critical bibliography of Villiers de l'Isle Adam is not

a vast one. There is, besides his principal works, only his life by his cousin Vicomte Dobert du Pontavice de Heussey; Rémy de Gourmont's brief, sympathetic notice in his inimitable Le Livre des Masques; Anatole France in La Vie Littéraire has dealt with the poet most subtly, as is his wont; Arthur Symons's study; Mallarmé's lecture; a few caricatures and a sketch by Paul Verlaine; a historic consideration by Alexis von Kraemer, translated from the Finnish; a charming and extended étude by Gustave Kahn; short essays by the lamented Hennequin, by J. K. Huysmans, in A Rebours, by Sarcey, Gustave Guiches, Henry Bordeaux, Teodor de Wyzewa, Georges Rodenback, Catulle Mendès; and fragmentary accounts in the ever valuable *Mercure de France*—and there the list is snuffed out.

Not precisely dissolute, rather disorganized, the life of Adam could be transformed into an object sermon by the wily educator and moralmonger. But that would be a poor way of viewing it. Born without average will power, except the will to imagine beautiful and strange things, Villiers, as he is generally called, all his years fought the contending impulses of his dual nature; fought bravely sometimes in the open air with the blue sky smiling down on him; fought as if facing an ambuscade at dark, and under the lowering clouds when all the powers of evil were abroad and at his elbow. Then, he was what Bayard Taylor called Edgar Poe—a bird of the night; a prowling noctambulist; a feverish being, whose violent gestures, burning eyes, and irresolute somnambulistic gait told the tale, the damnable and thrice-told tale, of wasted genius.

Poe is the literary ancestor of nearly all the Parnassian and Diabolic groups—ah, this mania for schools and groups and movements in Paris! Poe begat Baudelaire and Baudelaire begat Barbey d'Aurevilly and Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and the last-named begat Verlaine and Huysmans—and a long chain of other gifted men can claim these two as par-

ents, even to Mallarmé, De Maupassant, and Henri de Regnier (who has read the Horla of Guy de Maupassant will feel that therein the unhappy disciple of Flaubert has raised to a terrifying degree the methods of Poe; nor must Regnier's La Canne de Jaspe be forgotten). But they all come from Poe; Poe, who influenced Swinburne through Baudelaire; Poe, who nearly swept the young Maeterlinck from his moorings in the stagnant fens and under the morose sky of his lowlands. If we have no great school of literature in America, we can at least point to Poe as the progenitor of a half-dozen continental literatures.

Villiers can be traced to Poe on one side, just as Chateaubriand is another of his ancestors. M. de Gourmont deplores the criticism which would detach Villiers from his time and isolate him as a species of intellectual monster. There is much that is fantastic, even bizarre, in his work, and he never escaped the besetting sin of his associates, headed by Baudelaire, the childish desire to *épater le bourgeois,* to shock conventional morality and manners by eccentric behavior, outrageous speech, and paradoxical writings. This legacy of the romantic movement of 1830 really came across the water in Byron's poses of wickedness and heroic mystifications. It was, in reality, the Byronic attitude transposed to the Paris boulevards. Gautier wore a pink doublet (not scarlet, he says), and it was elevated to a symbol. Let us be scarlet, said these wild, young fellows, let our sins be splendid! And then the crew would wander abroad, making the night resound with their lyric outbursts, happy if a respectable citizen were scandalized, and in their pockets, a world too wide for their money, hardly the price of a bottle!

It was glorious, and it was art. But who cared, who knew? If a man of Baudelaire's intellectual powers, a profound critic, genius, and poet, could dye his hair green, simply to attract attention in the cafés, why should not men

of lesser abilities follow suit and commit all manner of extravagant pranks? Leconte de Lisle, impeccable poet and a prim sort of person, impatiently exclaimed: "Oh, ces jeunes gens! Tous fumistes!" And Thiers allowed to escape him the one *mot* of his complacent life worth remembering, "The Romanticists—that's the Commune!" Perhaps the pink doublets and strange oaths of Ernani and 1830 were transformed into the grim figures of that later lurid epoch.

Villiers was in the very core of this artistic Paris. He slept all day—or dreamed. At nightfall he stepped across the sill of his door, and when he had friends, money, glory, he dined at Brébant's; when he was shabby, he remained on the exterior boulevard. There, in some modest café, seated at a table surrounded by disciples eager for his ideas, his poetry, his scintillating wit,—eager to steal it and sell it as their own,—the Master spoke, his vague blue eyes gleaming, his long white hand waving aloft like a flag of revolt. What dreams, what eloquence, what a soul, went under on this ignoble battle-field! What slain ideals and poetry wasted in the very utterance, and what inroads on a nervous, sickly constitution! But Villiers lived the life he had elected. He was poor, always poor, and poverty makes extraordinary bedfellows. But—his room-mates were the most intellectual spirits of modern France. If Baudelaire could not drop in on him at his dusty lodgings, Richard Wagner would. And so there was talk—such talk—and there was that feeling of expansion, of liberation, which comes when a man like Turgenev could say to Flaubert: "Cheer up, old fellow! After all you are *Flaubert!*"

Villiers never forgot that he was Villiers. His pride, like his piety, was Luciferian. Nobly descended, he almost fought a duel with a distant cousin who doubted his birth. He claimed to spring from the ten times blue blood of a Grand Master of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,

who defended Rhodes against the Turks in the time of Charles V. With this thought he often wandered into a café and had his absinthe charged on the slate of the ideal, the reckoning of which no true poet listeth.

A mystic among mystics, yet his linen was not always impeccable. Verlaine, another son of the stars and sewers, wrote, "I am far from sure that the philosophy of Villiers will not one day become the formula of our century." "Know, once and for all, that there is for thee no other universe than that conception which is reflected at the bottom of thy thoughts"—this utterance of Villiers is the keystone of his system. In Elën (1864), his greatest drama, another idea comes to the surface in the dialogue of Samuel and Goetze. Samuel speaks: "Science will not suffice. Sooner or later you will end by coming to your knees." Goetze: "Before what?" Samuel: "Before the darkness." His life long, Villiers traversed the darkness which encompasses with the sure, swift step of a nyctalops, one who can pierce with his glance the deepest obscurity. So it is that in his plays and stories we are conscious of the great mystery of life and death hemming us about. Sometimes this atmosphere is morbidly oppressive, sometimes it is relieved by gay, maniacal bursts of laughter. Again it lifts and reveals the mild heavens streaked with menacing irony. There is lugubrious under-current in the buffooneries of Villiers. Philip Hale has translated the cruel story of the swans massacred by fear. This poet slew his soul by his evocation of terror.

He is a mystic, a spiritual romantic, and only a realist in his sardonic pictures of Paris life, tiny cabinet pictures, etchings, bitten out with the *aqua fortis* of his ghastly irony. There is the irony, a mask behind which pity, sympathy, lurk; Shakespeare wore this mask at times. And there is the irony that withers, that blasts. This is Villiers.

Axël is both difficult and illuminative reading. It is in

four acts with nine scenes. Each act or part is respectively entitled: The Religious World, The Tragic World, The Occult World, The Passional World. The poet had not known Wagner and his Tetralogy for naught. Sara is a superb creation—but not on the boards, in the disillusioning, depoetizing, troubled, and malarial air of the stage! It was a mistake to play Axël in Paris. Its solemn act of rejection of life at the moment "when life becomes ideal" is hardly fitting for the theatre. A drama to be played by poets before a parterre of poets! Arthur Symons has noticed with his accustomed acuity that "the modern drama under the democratic influence of Ibsen, the positive influence of Dumas *fils,* has limited itself to the expression of temperaments in the one case, of theoretic intelligences in the other, in as nearly as possible the words which the average man would use for the statement of his emotions and ideas. The form, that is, is degraded below the level of the characters whom it attempts to express."

It is a point well taken, though I feel inclined to rebel at the pinning down of form to language alone. Ibsen's terseness—and remember we only see him in the cold light of Mr. Archer's translations—is one of his merits; but his form, his dramatic form, is not alone in his text, but in the serene and ordered procession of his dramatic action. Villiers is more poetically eloquent than the Ibsen of the prose dramas. But as logical or as dramatic—!

Mr. Symons adds, "La Révolte, which seems to anticipate A Doll's House, shows us an aristocratic Ibsen, touching reality with a certain disdain, certainly with far less skill, certainly with far more beauty." For me in a play of character the beauty that appeals is not purely verbal. It is the beauty of character *quâ* character, and the beauty of events marshalled like a great sequence of mysterious music, humming with the indefinable harmonies of life. Ibsen makes this music; so does Gerhart Hauptmann. Axël is

noble drama, despite its formal shortcoming, its dream-like quality. Many went begging to Villiers, and few came away empty-handed. Prodigal in genius, he was prodigal in giving.

This poet, like most poets, loathed mediocrity. He sought the exceptional, the complex soul. "A chacun son infini," he said; and in Axël he cries: "As for living, our servants will do that for us! As at the play in a central stall, one sits out so as not to disturb one's neighbors—out of courtesy, in a word—some play written in a wearisome style of which one does not like the subject, so I lived, out of politeness." Here is the gauge cast disdainfully to those who forever pelt us with sweet phrases about loving our neighbor, about altruism, sympathy, and social obligations—all the self-illuding, socialistic cant, in a word, that rankles in the breast of the solitary proud man and poisons the mind of the weak. Villiers is the exorcist of the real, the bearer of the ideal, wrote De Gourmont, himself a poetic individualist. And he sums up, "Villiers knew all forms of intellectual intoxication."

Villiers associated much with Richard Wagner, and with Baudelaire was an ardent upholder of the new music during the troubled times of the Tannhäuser *fiasco*. He played the piano, knew the Ring by heart—no mean feat—and set Baudelaire's poems to music, anticipating Charles Martin Loeffler by nearly a half-century. Of one of them the music is said to be still extant. It is the poem with this couplet:—

> Our beds shall be scented with sweetest perfume,
> Our divans be as cool and dark as the tomb.

Probably the most lifelike, verbal portrait of Wagner is that of Villiers's. In a memorable passage, which I commend to Mr. Finck as testimony with which to snub recalcitrant clergymen and others, Villiers notes Wagner's violent disclaimer that his Parsifal was merely the work of the artist and not of the believing Christian. "Why, if I

did not feel in my inmost soul the living light and love of that Christian faith, my works . . . would be the works of a liar and an ape. My art is my prayer." Thus Villiers reports Wagner—Wagner, whose marvellous soul changed color every moment, like one of those exquisite flying fishes which paint the air and waters of the tropics.

In 1861, at Baudelaire's home, Villiers met Richard Wagner. It was at a period of great depression for that master. Villiers speaks of the interview as the most memorable of his life. "Wagner, with his high, remarkable forehead, almost terrifying in its development; his deep blue eyes, with their slow, steady, magnetic glance; his thin, strongly marked features, changing from one shade of pallor to another; his imperious hooked nose; his delicate, thin-lipped, unsatisfied, ironic mouth; his exceedingly strong, projecting, and pointed chin—seemed to Villiers like the archangel of celestial combat." A rare little band, composed of Wagner, Villiers, Baudelaire, and Catulle Mendès, often walked the town after midnight. Once they were down along a dreary street which ends at the Quai Saint-Eustache, and there Wagner pointed out to them the window of a garret at the top of a very high house. In it he said he almost starved, despaired, even meditated suicide. Villiers was a Wagnerian among Wagnerians. He paraphrased in words his impressions of the German's music, and some of these were published in Catulle Mendès's *Revue Fantaisiste*. He visited Wagner at Triebchen, near Lucerne, in Switzerland, although he was so poor that he had to walk part of the distance.

One of Villiers's characters was Triboulat Bonhomet. This was the man who was so avid of new sensations in music that he cruelly slew swans. During the autumn of 1879 Villiers was at Bayreuth in company with Judith Gautier and Catulle Mendès, and gave a reading from his works before a lot of crowned heads, Wagner and Liszt

included. He read some of the curious adventures of Bonhomet, and was surprised to hear his audience laugh, at first quietly, at last unrestrainedly. At last the tempest of laughter rose so high that the reader ceased and cast a glance full of vague suspicion round his audience. The Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who sat beside him, touched his shoulder and pointed to a person sitting just opposite them. Villiers, with a little sharp cry, dropped the manuscript from his trembling fingers and gave evident signs of lively terror. There in front of him, surrounded by a bevy of beautiful women, gazing at him with shining eyes, his enormous mouth opened in stentorian laughter, his huge hands leading applause, was Dr. Triboulat Bonhomet himself, flesh and bone. It was Franz Liszt!

From the very first line of the manuscript, in which Villiers had minutely described the doctor, the whole audience had been struck by the resemblance between the great pianist and Triboulat Bonhomet, and as the description went on the likeness increased—dress, gestures, habits, all bore a striking similarity. One person alone did not perceive the identity, and he laughed louder than the rest—Liszt himself. Finally the reading had to be stopped on account of the general hilarity, but Liszt was never told of the joke.

The most curious episode in the life of Villiers was when he won a prize with his five-act play, The New World. A dramatic competition was announced by the theatrical press of Paris. A medal of honor and ten thousand francs were offered to the French dramatic author who would "most powerfully recall in a work of four or five acts the episode of the proclamation of the independence of the United States, the hundredth anniversary of which fell on July 4, 1876. The two examining juries were composed as follows: the first, of the principal critics of the French theatrical press; the second, of Victor Hugo, honorary president; Emile Augier, Octave Feuillet, and Ernest Legouvé, members of

the French Academy; Mr. Grenville Murray, representing the New York *Herald,* and M. Perrin, administrator-general of the Théâtre Français."

Villiers's play conquered. His New World was passed by both juries. But through some sort of official deviltry he received neither money nor medal; nor was his play produced. He had the mortification of seeing a second-rate piece by Armand d'Artois given while his own work collected dust in the manuscript box of the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre. Naturally he raised a hubbub. He bearded the venerable Hugo at his home and there insulted not only the poet, but also the aged Legouvé. Conflict was the very breath of this visionary's nostrils. Did he not institute a ridiculous lawsuit against the author of a play because it vilified, so he claimed, a very remote ancestor? After interminable processes he was non-suited. And The New World was his favorite drama! Villiers had long dreamed of becoming the Richard Wagner of the drama.

His cousin says: "His idea was that the characteristics of the nation, or of the event which was to be portrayed, should be imported into the framework of some personal intrigue, in which each individual of the *dramatis personæ* should personify in his language, attitude, or actions some one of the numerous elements produced by the friction of the incidents of the play." Here is the leading motive idea of Wagner—a dangerous idea in the drama, where the pattern must not be too regular or too persistent. Villiers dreamed of a symphonic drama with a densely woven web. Poets seldom realize the bigness of that hollow frame, the theatre, on the background of which they must paint in bold, splashing colors, or else pay the penalty of not being seen at all. It is scene, not miniature, painting which is the real art of the drama.

In sooth, The New World is a play that would puzzle the most sanguine manager. It has been called "one of the

best constructed, deepest, and most passionate dramas of the present day," by a prejudiced witness, the cousin of the poet. Against the wishes of his true friends, Villiers allowed a representation, with dire results. Sarcey fairly peppered it with his wit; so bad were the actors and actresses that the author himself hissed furiously at every performance. This was at the Théâtre des Nations, 1883. There were six representations. And such an America as this poet depicts! It is as illusory, in another way, as Victor Hugo's England. Villiers had evidently read Châteaubriand's Atala—Châteaubriand, who cajoled his countrymen into the belief that he lived for years in Louisiana!—and so we are given some odd characters, odd happenings, odder history. Mistress Andrews, the heroine, is a sort of an American Melusina. Can any one in his most exalted mood picture an American Melusina?

And so this "hybrid, complex, contradictory being, by turns mysterious, terrible, cynical, innocent, loving, tragic, grotesque" poet, rolled down the hill of life. Is it not Pascal who says: "The last act is always tragedy, whatever fine comedy there may have been in the rest of life. We must all die alone"? Villiers was lonely and dying from his youth. Death was his intimate companion, sometimes a boon one, but oftener a consoling friend. The death's-head adorns his wassail time. Yet this poet actually went into politics, was a candidate at the elections of the *Conseil Général,* and was, luckily enough, defeated. One trembles at the idea of this aristocratic anarch among the bleating lawmakers. It is characteristic of him that he accepted his defeat calmly because his opponent was De Hérédia the poet. *Noblesse oblige!*

Villiers, like most European poets, had formed a mighty ideal of America and the Americans. He believed this country and its institutions to be what Thomas Paine, Jefferson, and a few other genuine patriots hoped it would be.

He entertained for Thomas Edison the deepest admiration. His novel, a grotesque book, The Eve of the Future, contains a fanciful account of Menlo Park and its "terrifying proprietor." When Edison went to the Paris exhibition in 1889 he became acquainted with Villiers's novel. He read it at a sitting and expressed himself thus: "That man is greater than I. I can only invent. He creates." He did not meet the author, who was mortally ill, though an attempt was made to bring the Frenchman and American together. The leading motive of The Eve of the Future, pushed to an ingenuity bordering on insanity, is the construction of an artificial woman which when wound up imitates in every respect the daily life of a cultivated lady!

J. K. Huysmans became known to Villiers, and his critical recognition of his genius, tardy though it was, was one of the few consolations accorded this unhappy man by fate. Huysmans it was who greatly persuaded Villiers to make a deathbed marriage and legitimize his son. His agony was intensified by the fact that his wife could not sign her name to the marriage contract, she could only make a cross. The artist in this dying man persisted to the last. Huysmans with his omnivorous eye has noted the sigh that escaped from the semi-moribund poet.

Thus he lived, thus he died, a stranger in a strange world. His plays may be better appreciated some day. If Ibsen profited by The Revolt, then the seed of Villiers has not been sown in vain. Nothing reveals Ibsen's mastery of the dramatic form so completely as his treatment of the woman who revolts and leaves her home, when compared to Villiers's handling of the same idea. Elizabeth goes away in despair, but to return. Nora departs, and the curtain quickly severs us from her future, her "miracle" speech being a faint prophecy that may be expanded some day into a fulfilment. Villiers was perhaps the pioneer; though revolting women abound in Dumas, abound in the Bible, for

that matter; but the specific woman who puts up the shutters of the shop, and declares the dissolution of the matrimonial firm, is the creation of Villiers. Ibsen developed the idea, and, great artist that he is, made of it a formal drama of beauty and dramatic significance—which The Revolt is not. There are many loose psychologic ends left untied by the Frenchman, and his conclusion is dramatically ineffectual.

What is the value of such a life, what its meanings? may be asked by the curious impertinents. Why select for study the character and career of a half-mad mystic? Simply because Villiers is a poet and not a politician. It is because Villiers is Villiers that he interests the student of literature and humanity. And the bravery, the incomparable bravery, of the man who like Childe Roland blew his slug-horn, dauntless to the last! In his Azrael he uses as a motto Hassan-ben Sabbah's "O Death! those who are about to live, salute thee." All the soul of Villiers de l'Isle Adam is in that magnificently defiant challenge!

IV

RICHARD STRAUSS AND NIETZSCHE

In discussing Richard Strauss' symphonic poem, Also Sprach Zarathustra, its musical, technical, emotional and æsthetic significance must be considered,—if I may be allowed this rather careless grouping of categories. The work itself is fertile in arousing ideas of a widely divergent sort. It is difficult to speak of it without drifting into the dialectics of the Nietzsche school. It is as absolute music that it should be critically weighed, and that leads into the somewhat forbidding field of the nature of thematic material. Has Strauss, to put it briefly, a right, a precedent to express himself in music in a manner that sets at defiance the normal eight bar theme; that scorns euphony; that follows the curve of the poem or drama or thesis he is illustrating, just as Wagner followed the curve of his poetic text? The question is a fascinating one and a dangerous one, fascinating because of its complexity, and also because any argument that attempts to define the limits of absolute music is an argument that is dangerous.

Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, three heroes of poetic realism, pushed realism to the verge of the ludicrous, according to their contemporaries. Liszt was especially singled out as the champion of making poems in music, making pictures in music, and giving no more clew to their meaning than the title. Liszt's three great disciples, Saint-Saëns, Tschaïkowsky and Richard Strauss, have dared more than their master. In Saint-Saëns we find a genial cleverness and a mastery of the decorative and more superficial side of music—all this allied to a charming fancy and great musicianship. Yet his stories deal only with the external

aspects of his subject. Omphale bids Hercules spin, and the orchestra is straightway transformed into a huge wheel and hums as the giant stoops over the distaff. Death dances with rattling xylophonic bones; Phaeton circles about the Sun God, and we hear his curved chariot and fervent pace. But the psychology is absent. We learn little of the thoughts or feelings of these subjects, and indeed they have none, being mere fabled abstractions clothed in the pictorial counterpoint of the talented Frenchman.

In Tschaïkowsky, the lights are turned on more fiercely; his dramatic characterization is marvellous when one considers that the human element is absent from his mechanism. He employs only the orchestra, and across its tonal tapestry there flit the impassioned figures of Romeo and Juliet, the despairing apparition of Francesca da Rimini, and the stalking of Hamlet and Manfred, gloomy, revengeful, imperious, thinking and sorrowing men.

Tschaïkowsky went far, but Richard Strauss has dared to go further. He first individualized, and rather grotesquely, Don Juan, Til Eulenspiegel, Macbeth; but in Death and Apotheosis and in Also Sprach Zarathustra he has attempted almost the impossible; he has attempted the delineation of thought, not musical thought, but philosophical ideas in tone. He has disclaimed this attempt, but the fact nevertheless remains that the various divisions and subdivisions of his extraordinary work are attempts to seize not only certain elusive psychical states, but also to paint pure idea—the "Reine vernunft" of the metaphysicians. Of course he has failed, yet his failure marks a great step in the mastery over the indefiniteness of music. Strauss' German brain with its grasp of the essentials of philosophy, allied to a vigorous emotional nature and a will and imagination that stop at nothing, enabled him to throw into high relief his excited mental states. That these states took unusual melodic shapes, that there is the suggestion

of abnormality, was to be expected; for Strauss has made a flight into a country in which it is almost madness to venture. He has, on his own opinions and purely by the aid of a powerful reasoning imagination, sought to give an emotional garb to pure abstractions. Ugliness was bound to result but it is characteristic ugliness. There is profound method in the madness of Strauss, and I beg his adverse critics to pause and consider his aims before entirely condemning him.

The object of music is neither to preach nor to philosophize, but the range of the art is vastly enlarged since the days of music of the decorative pattern type. Beethoven filled it with his overshadowing passion, and shall we say ethical philosophy? Schumann and the romanticists gave it color, glow and bizarre passion; Wagner moulded its form into rare dramatic shapes, and Brahms has endeavored to fill the old classic bottles with the new wine of the romantics. All these men seemed to dare the impossible, according to their contemporaries, and now Strauss has shifted the string one peg higher; not only does he demand the fullest intensity of expression but he insists on the presence of pure idea, and when we consider the abstract nature of the first theme of Beethoven's fifth symphony, when we recall the passionate inflection of the opening measures of Tristan and Isolde, who shall dare criticise Strauss, who shall say to him, Thus far and no farther?

I

Richard Strauss said of his work when it was produced in Berlin, December, 1896: "I did not intend to write philosophical music or portray Nietzsche's great work musically. I meant to convey musically an idea of the development of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to

Nietzsche's idea of the Uebermensch. The whole symphonic poem is intended as my homage to the genius of Nietzsche, which found its greatest exemplification in his book, Thus Spake Zarathustra."

For me the beginning is like Michel Angelo's Last Judgment, or the birth of a mighty planet; its close has the dreary quality of modern art, profoundly sad and enigmatic. There is no God for Strauss, there is no God in Tschaïkowsky's last symphony and there is no God for Nietzsche, no God but self.

You have Strauss' point of view, have you not? He disclaims making any attempt to set philosophy to tones; indeed Wagner's failure in Tristan and the Ring to ensnare Schopenhauer's metaphysic was sufficient warning for the younger man. The whole undertaking stands and falls upon the question: Is Also Sprach Zarathustra good music? I set aside now all considerations of orchestral technic—a technic that leaves Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner gaping aghast in the rear—and propose only the consideration of Strauss' thematic workmanship. Let it be at once conceded that he does not make beautiful music, that his melodies are unmelodious, even ugly, when subjected to the classic or romantic tests—call it classic and be done, for Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Wagner are classics—and we have now further narrowed the argument to a question of the characteristic or veristic in melody making, and this is the crux of the situation.

Has Richard Strauss, then, made characteristic music, and how has its character conformed with his own dimly outlined programme—not Dr. Riemann's analytical scheme?

"I did not intend to write philosophical music," he said. Of course not; it were impossible; but some of the raw elements of philosophy are in the poem; keen, overwhelming logic, sincerity, orbic centrality, and hints of the microcosm

and the macrocosm of music. Strauss set out to accomplish what has never before been accomplished in or out of the world, and he has failed, and the failure is glorious, so glorious that it will blind a generation before its glory is apprehended; so glorious that it blazes a new turn in the path made straight by Beethoven, Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner!

Wagner sought the aid of other arts, and sang his Schopenhauer in gloomy tones; Strauss, relying on the sheer audacity of the instrumental army, chants of the cosmos, of the birth of atoms, of the religious loves, hates, works, doubts, joys and sorrows of the atom, would fain deluge us with an epitome of the world processes, and so has failed. But what colossal daring! What an imagination! What poetic invention!

The authors of Genesis, of the Book of Job, of the Songs of Solomon, the Apocalypse, the Iliad, the Sermon on the Mount, the Koran, the Divine Comedy, Don Quixote, Shakespeare's plays, Faust, the Ninth Symphony and Tristan, all rolled into one would have failed too, before such a stupendous task.

Now, perhaps we may reach a comparative estimate of the glory involved in Richard Strauss' half-mad, idealistic failure.

Putting aside Riemann as a hopelessly involved guide—a baleful ignis-fatuus in a midnight forest,—Strauss' poem impressed me, after three hearings, as the gigantic torso of an art work for the future. Euphony was hurled to the winds, the Addisonian ductility of Mozart, the Théophile Gautier coloring of Schumann, Chopin's delicate romanticism, all were scorned as not being truthful enough for the subject in hand, and the subject is not a pretty or a sentimental one. Strauss, with his almost superhuman mastery of all schools, could have written with ease in the manner of any of his predecessors, but, like a new Empedocles on Ætna,

preferred to leap into the dark, or rather into the fiery crater of truth. In few bars did I discover an accent of insincerity, a making of music for the mere sake of music. He has leaped where Liszt feared to venture, and Strauss is Liszt's descendant as well as Wagner's. He cast aside all makeshifts, even the human voice, which is the human interest, and dared, with complicated virtuosity, to tell the truth—*his* truth, be it remembered—and so there is little likelihood of his being understood in this century.

It were madness to search for Nietzsche in Strauss—that is, in this score. It is un-Nietzsche music—Nietzsche who discarded Wagner for Bizet, Beethoven for Mozart. Schopenhauer, it may be remembered, laughed at Wagner the musician, played the flute and admired Rossini!

If Nietzsche, clothed in his most brilliant mind, had sat in the Metropolitan Opera House of New York City on the occasion of the first performance of his poem by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, December, 1897, he would probably have cried aloud: "I have pronounced laughter holy," and then laughed himself into the madhouse. Poor, unfortunate, marvellous Nietzsche! But it is Strauss mirroring his own moods after feeding full on Nietzsche, and we must be content to swallow his title, "Also Sprach Zarathustra," when in reality it is "Thus Spake Richard Strauss!"

The first theme—Zarathustra's, intoned by four trumpets—is solemnly prodigious; probably the dwellers in the rear world theme meant something to the composer. You see he has us on the hip; either accept his symbols or not; you have your choice, you believers in programme music; to me it was lugubriously shuddersome. I liked the beautiful A flat melody; it was almost a melody, and the yearning motive was tremendously exciting. In the section, Joys and Passions, the violins and 'celli sweep in mountainous curves of passion—never except in Wagner has this molten episode been equalled—and then the ground began to slip

under my feet. I grasped at the misty shadows of the grave song, and the tortuous and wriggling five voice fugue in Science seemed like some loathsome, footless worm. The dance chapter is shrilly bacchanalian. It may be the Over-Man dancing, but no human ever trod on such scarlet tones.

And the waltz melody! why, it is as common as mud, and intentionally so, but it is treated with Promethean touches. When I reached the part called the Song of the Night Wanderer, I renounced Bach, Beethoven and Brahms and became maddeningly intoxicated—not with joy but with doubt, despair and defiance. Never shall I forget that screaming trumpet as it cut jaggedly across the baleful gloom! Sinister beyond compare was the atmosphere, and I could have cried aloud with Dante:

"Lo, this is Dis!"

I understood the divine laughter of Hell, and it surely was Dis that held its sides and cackled infernally! When we had reached the rim of eternity, "the under side of nothing," as Daudet would have said, there the "twelve strokes of the heavy, humming bell":

ONE!
O Man, take heed!

TWO!
What speaks the deep midnight?

THREE!
I have slept, I have slept—

FOUR!
I have awaked out of a deep dream:—

FIVE!
The world is deep,

SIX!
And deeper than the day thought.

SEVEN!
Deep is its woe—

EIGHT!
Joy, deeper still than heart sorrow:

NINE!
Woe speaks: Vanish!

TEN!
Yet all joy wants eternity—

ELEVEN!
Wants deep, deep eternity!

TWELVE!

Where is Hell-Breughel, painter, or Kapellmeister Kreisler, composer, after this weltering symphony of sin, sorrow and cruel passions? Their symbolism seems crude and childish, although Hoffman's musician was certainly a forerunner of Strauss.

There is one thing I cannot understand. If the Wagnerians and the Lisztianer threw overboard old forms in obedience to their masters, why can they not accept the logical outcome of their theories in Strauss? If you pitch form to the devil, there must be a devil to pitch it to. Strauss is the most modern of the devils, and to the old classical group he would be the reductio ad absurdum of the movement that began with Beethoven. Do you hear? Beethoven! To assert that his shoulders are not broad enough to wear the mantle of Liszt, I can only ask why? Liszt seems jejune when it comes to covering an orchestral canvas of the size of Strauss's. Strauss is his natural musical son, and the son has quite as much to say thematically as the father, while in the matter of brush brilliancy, massing of color, startling figure drawing—witness Don Juan and Til Eulenspiegel—and swift thinking, Strauss is easily the superior. He has not Wagner's genius; far from it; yet, as Otto Floersheim said: "Also Sprach Zarathustra" is "the greatest score penned by man." It is a cathedral in architectonic and is dangerously sublime, dangerously silly,

with grotesque gargoyles, hideous flying abutments, exquisite traceries, fantastic arches half gothic, half infernal, huge and resounding spaces, gorgeous façades and heaven splitting spires. A mighty structure, and no more to be understood at one, two or a dozen visits than the Kölner Dom.

It lacks only simplicity of style; it is tropical, torrential, and in it there is the note of hysteria. It is complex with the diseased complexity of the age, and its strivings are the agonized strivings of a morbid Titan. Truthful? aye, horribly so, for it shows us the brain of a great man, overwrought by the vast emotional problems of his generation.

Also Sprach Zarathustra should be played once every season, and the audience be limited to poets, musicians and madmen. The latter, being Over-Men, would grasp its sad truths. And as I write I hear the key of B major and the key of C major and those three cryptic sinister Cs pizzicato at the close, and ask myself if, after all, Nietzsche and Strauss are not right, "Eternity's sought by all delight—eternity deep—by all delight."

II

Musically it is a symphonic poem of rather loose construction and as to outline; but rigorously logical in its presentment of thematic material, and in its magnificent weaving of the contrapuntal web. There is organic unity, and the strenuousness of the composer's ideas almost blind his hearers to their tenuity, and sometimes a squat ugliness. Strauss has confessed to not following a definite scheme, a precise presentation of the bacchantic philosophy of Nietzsche. Nietzsche was a lyrical rhapsodist, a literary artist first, perhaps a philosopher afterward. It is the lyric side of him that Strauss seeks to interpret. Simply as absolute music it is astounding enough—astounding in its scope, handling and execution. It is not as realistic as you im-

agine, not as realistic for instance as the Don Juan and Til Eulenspiegel. Strauss is here an idealist striving after the impossible, yet compassing the hem of grandeur, and often a conscious seeker after the abnormally ugly. Yet one hesitates to call his an abnormally evil brain. Abnormal it may be in its manifestation of eccentric power but it is not evil in its tendency, and a brain that can rear such a mighty tone structure is to be seriously dealt with.

As a mere matter of musical politics I do not care for programme music. Wagner and, before him, Beethoven, fixed its boundaries. Liszt, in his Faust symphony, and Wagner, in his Faust overture, read into pure music as much meaning as its framework could endure without calling in the aid of the sister arts. Strauss pushed realism to a frantic degree, giving us in his Death and Apotheosis the most minute memoranda. But in Also Sprach Zarathustra he has deserted surface imitations. The laughter of the convalescent, and the slow, creeping fugue betray his old tendencies. There is an uplifting roar in the opening that is really elemental. Those tremendous chords alone proclaim Strauss a man of genius, and their naked simplicity gives him fee simple to the heritage of Beethoven. But this grandeur is not maintained throughout.

The close is enigmatic, and the juggling with the tonality is fruitful of suspense, bewilderment. Yet it does not plunge the listener into the gloomy, abysmal gulf of Tschaïkowsky's last movement of the B minor symphony. It is not so simple nor yet so cosmical. Strauss has the grand manner at times, but he cannot maintain it as did Brahms in his Requiem, or Tschaïkowsky in his last symphonic work.

The narrative and declamatory style is often violently interrupted by passages of great descriptive power; the development of the themes seems coincidental with some programme in Strauss' mind and the contrapuntal ingenuity displayed is just short of the miraculous. There is a groan-

ing and a travailing spirit, a restless, uneasy aspiring which is Faust-like, and suggests a close study of Eine Faust Overture, but there is more versatility of mood, more hysteria and more febrile agitation in the Strauss score. It is a sheaf of moods bound together with rare skill, and in the most cacaphonous portions there is no suspicion of writing for the exposition of wilful eccentricity. There are reminiscences more in color than form of Tristan, of Walküre, Die Meistersinger, and once there was a suggestion of Gounod, but the composer's style is his own despite his Wagnerian affiliations.

Strauss is a man of rare and powerful imagination; the tentacles of his imagination are restlessly feeling and thrusting forward and grappling with material on most dangerous territory. The need of expression of definite modes of thought, of more definite modes of emotion, is a question that has perplexed every great composer. With such an apparatus as the modern orchestra—in Strauss' hands an eloquent, plastic and palpitating instrument—much may be ventured and, while the composer has not altogether succeeded—it is almost a superhuman task he sets himself to achieve—he has made us think seriously of a new trend in the art of discoursing music. Formalism is abandoned—Strauss moves by episodes; now furiously swift, now ponderously lethargic, and one is lost in amazement at the loftiness, the solidity and general massiveness of his structure. The man's scholarship is so profound, almost as profound as Brahms's; his genius for the orchestra so marked, his color and rhythmic sense so magnificently developed, that the general effect of his rhetoric is perhaps too blazingly brilliant. He has more to say than Berlioz and says it better, is less magniloquent and more poetical than Liszt, is as clever as Saint-Saëns, but in thematic invention he is miles behind Wagner.

His melodies, it must be confessed, are not always re-

markable or distinguished in quality, setting aside the question of ugliness altogether. But the melodic curve is big and passional. Strauss can be tender, dramatic, bizarre, poetic and humorous, but the noble art of simplicity he sadly lacks—for art it is. His themes in this poem are often simple; indeed the waltz is distinctly commonplace, but it is not the Doric, the bald simplicity of Beethoven. It is rather a brutal plainness of speech.

Strauss is too deadly in earnest to trifle or to condescend to ear tickling devices. The tremendous sincerity of the work will be its saving salt for many who violently disagree with the whole scheme. The work is scored for one piccoli-flute, three flutes (the third of which is interchangeable with a second piccolo), three oboes, one English horn, one E flat clarinet, two ordinary clarinets, one bass clarinet, three bassoons, one double bassoon, six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two bass tubas, one pair of kettledrums, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, Glockenspiel, one low bell, two harps, the usual strings, and organ.

V

THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

The death of Johannes Brahms in 1897 removed from the sparsely settled land of music the last of the immortals; the one whom Bülow justly ranked with Bach and Beethoven; the one upon whom Schumann lavished both praise and prophecy. Not by any wrench of the imagination can we conjure the name of Antonin Dvŏrák, despite his delightful gift of saying naïve and Slavic things; not by any excess of sentiment can we dower Italy's grand old man Verdi with the title, nor yet France's favorite son, Saint-Saëns; not any one nor all of these three varying talents can be compared to the great, virile man who died in Vienna, the city of his preference but not of his birth.

When the printed list of Brahms's achievements in song, sonata, symphony and choral works of vast proportions is placed before you, amazement at the slow, patient, extraordinary fertility and versatility of the man seizes upon you. It is not alone that he wrote four symphonies of surpassing merit, two piano concertos, a violin concerto, a double concerto for violin and violoncello, songs, piano pieces, great set compositions like the Song of Destiny and the German Requiem, duos, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, sestets, all manner of combinations for wood, for wind, for strings and voices; it is the sum total of high excellence, the stern, unyielding adherence to ideals sometimes almost frostily unhuman—in a word, the logical, consistent and philosophic bent of the man's mind—that forces your homage. For half a century he pursued the beautiful in its most elusive and difficult form; pursued it when the fashions of the hour, day and year mocked at such whole-

sale, undeviating devotion, when form was called old-fashioned, sobriety voted dull, and the footlights had invaded music's realm and menaced it in its very stronghold—the symphony.

When a complete life of Johannes Brahms is written, this trait of fidelity, this marvellous spiritual obstinacy of the man, will be lovingly dealt with. There seems to be a notion abroad that because Brahms refused to challenge current tendencies in art and literature he held himself aloof, was remote from humanity, was a bonze of art, a Brahmin, and not a bard chanting its full-blooded wants and woes with full throat. Nothing could be wider of the truth. Brahms's music throbs with humanity; with the rich red blood of mankind. He was the greatest contrapuntist after Bach, the greatest architectonist after Beethoven, but in his songs he was as simple, as manly, as tender as Robert Burns. His topmost peaks are tremendously remote, and glitter and gleam in an atmosphere almost too thin for dwellers of the plains; but how intimate, how full of charm, of graciousness, are the happy moments in his chamber music!

It is not rashly premature for us to assign to Brahms a place among the immortals. Coming after the last of the most belated romanticists, untouched by the fever for the theatre, a realist with great imagination, both a classicist and a romanticist, he led music back in her proper channels by showing that a phenomenal sense of form and a mastery of polyphony second only to Bach are not incompatible with progress, with the faculty of uttering new things in a new way. Brahms is not a reactionary any more than is Richard Wagner. Neither of these men found what he needed, so one harked back to Gluck and the Greeks, the other to Bach and Beethoven. Consider the massiveness of Brahams's tonal architecture; consider those structures erected after years of toil; regard the man's enormous fer-

tility of ideas; enormous patience in developing them; consider the ease with which he moves shackled by the most difficult forms—not assumed for the mere sake of the difficult, but because it was the only form in which he could successfully express himself; consider the leavening genius, the active geniality of the man, which militates against pedantry, the dryness of scholasticism and the mere arithmetical music of the kapellmeister; consider the powerful, emotional and intellectual brain of this composer, and then realize that all great works in art are the arduous victories of great minds over great imaginations! Brahms ever consciously schooled his imagination.

Brahms was Brahms's greatest critic. He worked slowly, he produced slowly and, being of the contemplative rather than the active and dramatic type, he incurred the reproach of being phlegmatic, Teutonic, heavy and thick. There is enough sediment in his collected works to give the color of truth to this allegation, but from the richness and the cloudiness of the ferment is thrown off the finest wine; and how fine, how incomparably noble is a draught of this wine after the thin, acid, frothing and bubbling stuff concocted at every season's musical vintage!

Brahms reminds one of those mediæval architects whose life was a prayer in marble; who slowly and assiduously erected cathedrals, the mighty abutments of which flanked majestically upon mother earth, and whose thin, high pinnacles pierced the blue; whose domes hung suspended between heaven and earth, and in whose nave an army could worship, while in the forest of arches music came and went like the voices of many waters.

He was a living reproach to the haste of a superficial generation. Whatever he wrought he wrought in bronze and for time, not for the hour. He restored to music its feeling for form. He was the greatest symphonist in the constructive sense since Beethoven. He did not fill it with

a romantic content as did Schumann, but he never defaced or distorted its flowing contours. Not so great a colorist as Schumann or Berlioz, he was the greatest master of pure line that ever lived. He is accused of not scoring happily. The accusation is true. Brahms does not display the same gracious sense of voicing the needs and capabilities of every orchestral instrument as have Berlioz, Dvŏrák and Strauss. He is often very muddy, drab and opaque, but his nobility of utterance, his remarkable eloquence and ingenuity in treatment make you forget his shortcomings in color. But in writing for choral masses, for combinations, such as clarinet and strings, piano, violin and 'cello, or for piano solo, he had few masters. There seems to be a perverse vein in his handling of orchestral color. He gives you the impression of mastery, but writes as if to him the garb, the vestment were naught, and the pure, sweet flesh and form, all.

Brahms had his metaphysical moments when he wrestled with the pure idea as speculatively as a Pascal or a Spinoza. There are minutes in his music when he becomes the purely contemplative mind surveying the nave of the universe; when Giotto's circle is for him an "O Altitudo." It cannot be said, then, that Brahms the philosopher, the utterer of cryptic tones, is as interesting as Brahms the composer of the second and third symphonies, the composer of the F minor piano sonata, the F minor piano quintet, the creator of the Schicksalslied, the German Requiem or those exquisite and fragrant flowers, the songs.

Brahms is the first composer since Beethoven to sound the note of the sublime. He has been called austere for this. He has sublimity at times; something that Schumann, Rubinstein, Raff or Tschaïkowsky never quite compassed. To this is allied that forbidding quality, that want of commonplace sympathy, that lack of personal profile which make his music very often disliked by critic, amateur

and professional. He would never make any concessions to popularity; indeed, like Henrik Ibsen, he often goes out of his way to displease! The facile, cheap triumph he despises; he sees all Europe covered with second and third rate men in music, and he notes that they please! their only excuse for living is to give cheap pleasure.

This, and the naturally serious bent of the man, superinduced excessive puritanism. It is a sign of his great culture and flexible mental operations that he grew to study and admire Wagner toward the close of his hard-working life.

Brahms's workmanship is almost impeccable. His mastery of material is as great as Beethoven's and only outstripped by Bach. I have dwelt sufficiently upon his formal and contrapuntal sense. His contribution to the technics of rhythm is enormous. He has literally popularized the cross-relation, re-discovered the arpeggio and elevated it from the lowly position of an accompanying figure to an integer of the melodic phrase. Wagner did the same for the essential turn.

A pure musician, a maker of absolute music, a man of poetic ideals, is Brahms, without thrusting himself forward in the contemporary canvas. Not Berlioz, not Wagner, but the plodding genius Brahms, was elected by destiny to receive upon his shoulders the mantle dropped by Beethoven as he ascended the slope to Parnassus, and the shoulders were broad enough to bear the imposing weight.

They are fast becoming sheeted dead, these great few left us. Who shall fill Wagner's tribune; who shall carve from the harmonic granite imperishable shapes of beauty as did Johannes Brahms?

I

With the death of the master the time has come for an extended and careful investigation of the piano sonatas, the rhapsodies, the intermezzi, the capriccios, the fantasias, the

ballades and all the smaller and curious forms left us; a collection, let me preface by declaring, that is more significant and more original than any music since Chopin. Now that I have sounded the challenge I must at once proceed to attenuate it by making some qualifications and one explanation. Brahms occupies an unsought for and rather unpleasant position in the history of contemporary music. Without his consent he was championed as an adversary of Wagner, and I believe Eduard Hanslick, most brilliant of critics, had something to do with this false attitude. Hanslick hated Wagner and adored Brahms. There you have it; and presently the silly spectacle was observed of two men of straw being pitted one against the other and all musical Europe drawn into a quarrel as absurd as the difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. Wagner and Brahms are the very antipodes of art, and let it be said most forcibly that art contains easily without violence the various music of two such great artists, although some critics differ from me in this.

Wagner was a great fresco painter, handling his brush with furious energy, magnificence and dramatic intensity. Beside his vast, his tremendous scenery, the music of Brahms is all brown, all gray, all darkness, and often small. It is not imposing in the operatic sense, and it reaches results in a vast, slow, even cold blooded manner, compared with the reckless haste of Richard of the Footlights. One is all showy externalization, a seeker after immediate and sensuous effects; the other, one of those reserved, self-contained men who feels deeply and watches and waits. In a word, Wagner is a composer for the theatre, with all that the theatre implies, and sought to divert—and nearly succeeded—the tide of music into theatrical channels.

Brahms is for the concert room, a symphonist, a song writer and, above all, a German. I wish to emphasize this point of nationality. Wagner was the Celt, with a dash of

the Oriental in his blood, and he bubbled and foamed over with primal power, but it was not the reticent, grave power of the Teuton, who, as Amiel puts it, gathers fuel for the pile and allows the French to kindle it. Whether it was Wagner's early residence in Paris, or perhaps some determining pre-natal influence, he surely had a vivacity, an esprit, imagination and a grace denied to most of his countrymen, Heine excepted. You may look for these qualities in Brahms, but they are rarely encountered. Sobriety, earnestness, an intensity that is like the blow of a steam hammer, and a rich, informing spirit are present, and undoubted temperament also, but as there are temperaments and temperaments, so the temperament of Brahms differs from the temperament of Wagner, the temperament of Chopin and the temperament of Liszt. There is a remoteness, a sense of distance in his music that only long pursued study partially dissipates. He is a chilly friend at first, but the clasp of the hand is true, if it is not always charmful. I find the same difficulty in Beethoven, in Ibsen, in Gustave Flaubert, and sometimes in Browning, but never in Schumann and never in Schubert. As Emerson said of Walt Whitman, there must have been a "long foreground somewhere" to the man, and that foreground is never wholly traversed with Brahms.

You will ask me what is there then so fascinating in this austere, self-centred man, whose music at first hearing suggests both a latter-day Bach and a latter-day Beethoven?

The answer is simply this: Brahms is a profound thinker; his chilliness is in manner, not matter; he is a thinker, but he also feels sincerely, deeply, and maybe, as Ehlert says, feels with his head and thinks with his heart. He is hardly likely to become popular in this generation, yet he is a very great artist and a great composer. Von Bülow was enjoying a little of his perverse humor when he spoke of the three Bs. Brahms is not knee-high to Bach or Beethoven, yet he is their direct descendant, is of their classic lineage, although a be-

lated romanticist, and the only man we see fit to mention after the two kings of the tone art.

This does not mean that Schumann, Berlioz, Tschaïkowsky, Liszt, Wagner and the rest are not as great, or even greater, but simply that certain immutable and ineluctable laws of art are understood by Brahms, who prefers to widen in his own fashion the beaten path rather than conquer new ones.

In 1853 Schumann wrote his New Paths, and Brahms became known. Schumann had doubtless certain affinities with the young man of twenty, and he also recognized his strangeness, for in the first bar of Brahms you are conscious of something new, something strange. It is not in the form, not in the idea, not in the modulation, rhythmical change, curve of harmonic line, curve of melodic line, yet it is in all these that there lurks something new, something individual. This same individuality caused Schumann to rub his eyes when he heard the C major sonata, and made Liszt grow enthusiastic when he read the scherzo in E flat minor.

I quite agree with Spitta that it is a mistake to suppose that Brahms worked altogether on the lines of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schumann. I called him a belated romanticist a moment ago because much of the content of his music is romantic, and in his latter days excessively modern. It is because of his adherence to classic forms, and his harking back to the methods of the sixteenth century, that the music of Brahms so often misleads both critic and public. Spitta dilates most admirably upon the richness and variety of his tonality, by his reversion to almost forgotten manners and modes: the Doric, his characteristic use of the octave, the sharpening of minor thirds and sixths, his remarkable employment of the chord of the sixth, sharp transitions in modulation, the revival of playing common time against triple time, and the use of rhythms and tonali-

ties that are vague, indeterminate and almost misleading, without damage to the structural values and beauty of the music.

Then in form Brahms knows the canon as no other composer. Listen to Spitta: "Schumann had already seriously studied and revised the canon, which had sunk to the level of an amusing exercise; Brahms interested himself in its stricter construction and used it in a greater variety of forms. The extension and diminution of the melody again —that is to say, the lengthening of the strain by doubling the value of the notes, or shortening it by diminishing their value, which was such an important element of form in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, came to light again for the first time with all its innate musical vitality when Brahms took it up, and even in his earliest works (for instance, op. 3, no. 2) showed how thoroughly he understood it. The same is to be said of the method of inversion, the derivation of a new melody from the former by reversing the intervals. When the use of such 'artifices'—as they were called with an amazing misapprehension of the very essence of music—had from time to time been admitted, they had always been restricted to what was termed a 'Gelehrten Satz'; that is to say, they were worked out as school exercises and formed no part of the artist's living work. But with Brahms they pervade all his music, and find a place as much in the piano sonata and the simple ballad as in the grand choral pieces with orchestral accompaniments.

"The basso ostinato, with the styles pertaining to it—the Passacaglia and the Ciacona—resume their significance for the first time since Bach's time, and their intrinsic importance is enhanced by the support of the symphonic orchestra."

And with all this, as Ehlert truly says, "Brahms's art undoubtedly rests upon the golden background of Bach's purity and concentration."

I know it may be questioned whether Brahms belongs to the romantic camp, but while he has absorbed with giant-like ease the individualization of voices and the severity of Bach, yet he is a modern among moderns. How modern, you will discover if you play first the early music of Schumann, or the music of Chopin's middle period, and then take up the B minor rhapsody or some of the later fantasias. Brahms then seems so near, so intimate, so full of vitality, while the romantic music has a flavor of the rococo, of the perfume of the salon, of that stale and morbid and extravagant time when the classics were defied and Berlioz thought to be a bigger man than Beethoven. But all passes, and time has left us of Schumann's piano music, the Symphonic Variations, the F sharp minor and the F minor sonatas, the fantasy in C and the concerto, while the mists are slowly enveloping most of Chopin's earlier music. Doubtless the studies, preludes, the F minor fantasy, one polonaise, the barcarolle, the F minor ballade, the C sharp minor and the B minor scherzi will live forever, and I am not so sure that I could predict the same of the piano music of Brahms. However, escape this fact we cannot: Brahms is our most modern music maker, and if, as Edward MacDowell says, Tschaïkowsky's music always sounds better than it is, the music of Brahms is often better than it sounds!

Now I have made all of my qualifications, and my single explanation is this: I am not a reckless Brahms worshipper. There is much in his music that repels, and I have often studied his piano with knitted brow. After the exquisite, poetic tenderness of Chopin, the overflowing romance of Schumann, the adorable melody of Schubert, and the proud pose of Weber—who prances by you on gayly and gorgeously caparisoned arpeggios—Brahms may sound cold, formal, and much of the mathematician, but strip him of his harsh rind, taste the sweetness, the richness, the manliness of the fruit and you will grow enthusiastic.

It would be easy and it would look imposing for me to

map out three styles in Brahms, as De Lenz did with the piano sonatas of Beethoven. But it would be manifestly absurd, for as much as Brahms gained in mastery and variety in his later years, yet he was more Brahms in his op. 1 than was Chopin in *his* op. 2—the famous La Ci Darem, the variations that led Schumann to his famous discovery. Take, for instance, the E flat minor scherzo, so different from Chopin's glorious one in the same key in the B flat minor sonata. This scherzo of Brahms is an op. 4, and he played it for Schumann during the historical visit to Düsseldorf. It has in it something of Chopin, more in color than idea, and it is so free, so flowing, so plastic, so happily worked out, that it must have come upon Liszt and Schumann as something absolutely new. Yet I find it old-fashioned compared to his op. 116 or 117 or 118 or 119. Even the rhapsodies strike a new note, so I may without impropriety, and I hope without pedantry, make a general division of his piano music into two groups. In the first I include the three sonatas, the scherzo—which is a separate opus—the variations, the four ballades, and the Walzer, op. 39. There is then a skip to op. 76 before we encounter solo music, and here I begin my second group with the eight capriccios and intermezzi. Then follow the two rhapsodies, and until op. 116 we encounter no piano soli. With op. 119 Brahms's contributions to piano literature end. The two books of technical studies, fifty-one in all, will be considered, as will the Hungarian dances, arranged by the composer from the orchestral partition.

This grouping is purely arbitrary, and I warn you that the composer cannot be pinned down to any such cataloguing, for we find in his second sonata, the one in F sharp minor, stuff that is kin to his latest works and in some of his new fantasies a reversion to the Brahms of the Ballades.

Regarding his technics I can only recommend to you a

close study of the music. There is much that is unusual side by side with the most trite patterns. He has a special technic, sudden extensions, he is fond of tenths and twelfths —the interlocking—for instance, in the capriccio in D minor with its devilish rhythms and cross accent, and the spreading of the triplet over two bars of three-four time—the rapid flights in chord playing—all these things require a firm seat in the saddle, hands with ten well individualized voices and a light wrist. The best preparation for Brahms is Bach, then the toccata of Schumann, and then the Brahms studies. There are scales in Brahms's music, but not many. His passage work is of the most solid character, broken chords, double notes, especially thirds and sixths, and few arpeggios. The triolen he has idealized as did Wagner the essential turn, and his accompaniment figures are always simple, indeed vital parts of the composition. Brahms is not a great original melodist. Like Schumann his melodies can hardly be divorced from his harmonies. He had his moments of ecstatic lyrism, and I can show you many specimens of perfect melodies in his piano music. He is not always gloomy, forbidding, cross-grained and morbid. Take the first movement of the D major symphony, the slow movement of the F minor sonata, some of the songs, the horn trio, and tell me if this man cannot unbend the bow, say lovely, gracious things and be even nimble of wit and of gait?

Regarding Brahms's muddy orchestration, this is a question I leave to my betters. Scored in the high, violent purples and screaming scarlets of Richard Strauss, the grave, reflective, philosophic accents of the C minor and E minor symphonies would be as foolishly attired as Socrates the day Plato insisted upon his donning the fashionable costume of Athens's gayest youth.

Touching the muddiness and heaviness of the doubled basses of the piano music, I may say that it is a matter of

taste. Some pianists, indeed some musicians, do not care for a broad foundational bass. The arpeggio figure in the left hand has been worked to death, and it is a relief to find Brahms making his accompaniment figures an integer of the piece itself.

He has dealt the death blow to the tyranny of virtuoso passage work. No composer dare follow him and expect to build up, to advance, who employs passage work for the sake of mere display of the desire to dazzle. Every note of Brahms belongs to the framework, to the musical scheme. He is more Hellenic than Mozart in his supreme economy, and not even Beethoven is more devoted to formal beauty. He has not much sense of humor, and the scherzi, while not being as ironical or as brilliant as Chopin's, are none the less misnomers. In his working-out sections the marvellously inventive and logical brain of Brahms is seen at its culminating splendor. As free in his durchführungsatz as the wind, he has emancipated the sonata form in the matter of tonality and in the matter of emotional content. Excepting Chopin and Wagner, no composer has ever exhibited such versatility in the choice of keys. His use of mixed scales—a result of his studies in Hungarian music—gives his music its intensely foreign coloring. There you have Brahms, a German, a follower of Bach and Beethoven as regards polyphony and form, a reticent romanticist and a lover of certain colorings that I call foreign, because they are certainly not European. He has appropriated the Magyar spirit with infinitely more success than Liszt—take the last movement of the B flat major concerto—and when I say Magyar I mean almost Asiatic.

Brahms has in the piano concerto freed the form forever, while writing within the limits of that form. His two concertos are concertos, not rhapsodies and fantasies, and the solo instrument, instead of being a brilliant but loquacious gabbler of glittering platitudinous passage work, is

now the expounder of the musical idea and the stanch ally of the orchestra.

Despite his vast knowledge, an almost magical erudition, there is a certain looseness and want of finish about Brahms that is refreshing in these days of Art for Art's sake and the apotheosis of the cameo cutter. He is never a little master, although he can work exceeding fine and juggle for you by the hour the most gorgeous balls of bitter-sweet virtuosity. He is not, I say, always the pedant, and he can be as dull as ditch water two times out of ten. He has his feminine side—his songs—but in the main he is a muscular male, not given to over-expansion and not always companionable.

I agree with Mr. Edgar Kelley that his music is not always klaviermässig, but the same objection was urged against Beethoven, Schumann and even Chopin! I prefer a granitic bass, although the doubling is not always agreeable. But Schumann and Chopin were sinners in this respect, especially the former. That is why I recommend the great toccata in C as a preliminary study to Brahms. To sincere antagonists of Brahms, such as Mr. Henry T. Finck, I can only say that not every poet is to one's taste. Browning's Sordello is crabbed music after Tennyson, and Swinburne cloying, after Matthew Arnold or Arthur Hugh Clough. But the inner, the spiritual ear is longer enamored of the harmonies of a Brahms or Bach than of the sonorous splendors of Wagner or Verdi. It is the still, small voice discerned in a Brahms adagio or a Chopin prelude that abides by us and consoles when the music of the theatre seems superficial and garish. Those who do not care for Brahms—let them choose their own musical diet. There are, however, some of us who prefer his lean to other composers' fat. The light that beats about his throne is a trifle dry at times, but it is at least white, and the time comes to all when the chromatic ceases to make thrall, and line, not

color, seems the more beautiful. Therefore do not follow me further if you are a genuine anti-Brahmsianer. You might hear unpalatable truths.

II

Brahms must have been completely worn out when he presented his credentials to Schumann one memorable October morning in 1853. He had walked part of the way to Düsseldorf because his money was gone, and not being of Heinrich Heine's mercurial temperament, he probably did not think of the witty poet's "fine plums between Jena and Weimar," but to Schumann's questioning, answered by playing the C major sonata, his op. 1.

Little wonder Schumann, great artist and great critic, should have declared of it that it was "music the like of which he had never heard before," and proclaimed the shy, awkward youth a master. It was enough to turn the head of any one but a Brahms, who had just played at Weimar. Through Liszt's golden generosity the young man played in concert his op. 4, the scherzo in E flat minor, which Liszt praised warmly, and its romantic flush and passion caused Brahms's name to be added as a strong, promising one to the revolutionary and romantic party.

We heard Von Bülow interpret the sonata in C when he played here last. It is a sterling work, clearly, forcibly presented, the key-note of the opening movement being virile determination. Here was a young giant who delighted in wrestling with his material, who enjoyed its very manipulation. You can see the big muscles in his broad back bulge out to the bursting point, for the task he had set himself was no facile one. Nurtured on Bach and Beethoven, the new music-maker started out full of the ideals of these two masters, and you are not surprised by the strong and strange resemblance to Beethoven's op. 106, the Hammer-Klavier

sonata in B flat. This resemblance is more than rhythmic, but it stops after the enunciation of the first subject, for following a subsidiary the lyric theme is surely Brahms's, while the working-out section, which begins with the use of the second theme, is simply extraordinary for a beginner. It reveals all the devices of counterpoint used in the freest fashion, and doubtless led Schumann to class the composer as a romanticist, for learning never moved about with such airy fantasy. Doubtless, too, Schumann's monophonic sins rose before him in the presence of this genial polyphony. Just compare the Abegg variations with the slow movement of this sonata and you may realize the superior educational advantages enjoyed by Brahms.

The andante is built on the theme of an old German Minnelied, the words of which begin so: "Verstohlen geht der Mond, blau, blau, Blümelein." The left hand sounds eight single tones: then both hands, imitating the chorus, play in transparent four-part harmony. The effect is simplicity itself and seems to upspring from the very soil of the Fatherland; Brahms takes his subject and treats it with sweet reticence, even to the coda, one of his most charming. The scherzo leaps boldly into the middle of things, a habit of Brahms, and is Beethovian in its economy of material and sharply defined outlines. The trio is very melodious; the whole movement impresses you as the work of a musical thinker. The finale in strict form interests me less, although there is a characteristic song theme. The entire sonata overflows with vigor and imagination.

The second sonata, op. 2, in F sharp minor, brings us from the study chamber to more stirring life. The design of the first movement is large. We get the first touch of the grand manner—and Brahms is genuinely dramatic, the drama of the physical plane as well as of the psychical. There can be no mistaking the accents of the introduction, with its well sustained element of suspense, its skips—a

familiar feature in the Brahms piano music—and the thundering octaves. Here is virtuosity in plenty for you in the first two pages, and if after playing pages three and four you find Brahms deficient in romantic warmth, then let us unclasp hands and seek you some well-footed byway.

This second theme is nobility itself, and written in full chords; the harmonies are not so dispersed as you might imagine; the effect is sonorous and beautiful; of darkness there is none, and the clarity of the design is admirable. The polyphonic branches of this great trunk are finely etched against a dramatic background, and this most energetic of allegros has no savor of Schumann's sonata in the same key; and yet the temptation to imitate must have been well-nigh irresistible to a neophyte. The very key color might tempt even the most strong headed, but Brahms was too prepossessed with his own thoughts, and so we get a movement that is a great step in advance over the first sonata.

Both the second and third movements are built on the same thematic idea, an extremely simple one of four notes, B, C, D, A sharp, with an answer. The key is B minor. The scherzo is extremely ingenious. The trio is in D, and abounds in harmonic and rhythmic variety. The last movement actually contains in the introduction a scale run. The movement itself reminds me, but in an odd, perverted way, of the second movement of Beethoven's sonata, op. 90, in E minor. The finale contains a big climax, also in scales that look very un-Brahmsian. This sonata in F sharp minor is much more significant than its predecessor.

When you have reached the third sonata in F minor, op. 5, the broad, far-reaching uplands of the composer's genius are clearly discerned, for his two earlier efforts in the sonata form, despite their mastery of technics of form, still remain grounded on the territory of Beethoven and even of Schumann. But in the third sonata we are impressed by a cer-

tain passionate grandeur and originality of utterance, a freedom and elasticity of movement, a more nervous fibre, a deeper feeling, a deeper fire. I consider—and remember that my single opinion is nothing as compared to the number of them that believe the same—that in the F minor sonata the most beautiful in the genius of Brahms has flowered. The first allegro is heaven-storming, the second theme, oh! so like the master at his best, while page after page unrolls for us the warp and woof of the most logical musical imagination since Bach. Brahms not a melodist! Read that first movement, and if that does not convince you, play the andante in A flat, the most exquisite lyrical thing he has even penned for piano. Its motto is from Sternau, "Der Abend dämmert, das Mondlicht scheint," and the picture is magical in its tender beauty and suggestiveness. It harks back to the old world romance, to some moonlit dell, wherein love hovers for a night, and about all is the mystery of sky and wood.

Take the poco piu lento, in four-sixteenth time, with its recurring sixths, divided so amorously for two hands; with any one else but Brahms this well used interval would be banal, but he knows its possibilities and the entire section with the timid-sweet chords of the tenth evokes a mood seldom met with. Moonlight may be hinted at, as in the middle part, the trio of Chopin's scherzo in B minor. Here is an analogous picture. The coda has always brought back to me Hans Sachs's "Dem Vogel der heut' sang." Yes, Brahms knew his Wagner, too, and no doubt would have laughed in his gnomic beard if you had mentioned the mood-resemblance. Moriz Moszkowski has also seized the same idea, for in his Momen Musicale in C sharp minor he has for a second subject this identical one. It comes originally from Schumann's song, Sonntags am Rhein. The resemblance to the Meistersinger lies principally in the third bar of this coda in the upward inflection. Brahms has treated the en-

tire movement with unsurpassable poetry. In the scherzo which follows he is at his best; a certain grim, diabolic humor being hurled at you as if some being, ambuscaded in Parnassus, took pleasure in showering heavy masses of metal on your unprotected head. The tempo suggests the valse, but an epical valse. This is the greatest scherzo ever composed by Brahms, and the trio takes us back to Beethoven.

In the intermezzo—the Rückblick—the resemblance to Mendelssohn has not escaped Mr. Fuller-Maitland. It is in the key of B flat minor, and is a far-off echo, as if heard through sad, falling waters, of the theme of the andante. The bass is naught else—and this no writer has dared or perhaps thought necessary to notice—than the Funeral March from Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words. The familiar triplet in thirty-second notes emphasizes the similarity, but what a vast distance there is in this tragic page, full of veiled suffering, and the pretty and elegiac march of Mendelssohn!

The finale is strong and full of characteristic agitation. The technics throughout are Beethoven's, but a latter day Beethoven. Heavy chord work, no scales, passages, extreme clearness and plenty of involved rhythms. The character of this sonata is lofty, not altogether serene, but the strong, self-contained soul is there; it is music for men of strong nerves and big hearts, and not for the sick or shallow brained.

There is a piano sonata arranged from the sextet in B flat for strings. It is not the arrangement of Brahms, but by Robert Keller, and is not difficult. It is chiefly interesting because of its being an agreeable and available score of the famous chamber music.

The scherzo in E flat minor is a separate opus—four in the published list. Whether it was ever intended to fit in the more extended scheme we do not know; probably Dr. Han-

slick could enlighten us. It is the airiest and loveliest thing imaginable, and while the composer solves some very pretty canonic problems, the learning is never burdensome. As if Brahms had resolved to let gravity go hence, he wings his way in graceful plastic flight, not forgetting in his second theme to give Grieg the melodic idea for the first allegro of the popular piano concerto. There are two trios, both interesting, the second more to my taste, because of its lyricism. Just here we get a Chopin touch in the C sharp minor theme, with its rolling, arpeggiated basses. The development and return of the subject is most happily managed. Why this piano piece does not figure often upon the programmes of recitals is only to be explained by the hide-bound, timid conservatism of the average concert pianist. I swear to you I firmly believe that the decadence of the piano recital—and who can deny that it is not in decay—is to be ascribed to the fact that the scheme of the programmes is so lugubriously monotonous. Bach-Liszt, Beethoven sonata, Chopin or Schumann group, Liszt Hungarian rhapsody, there you have it season after season; whereas, a far-seeing pianist might introduce an occasional novelty by Brahms, or indeed by any one, and with the thin edge of the wedge once in, a complete topsy-turveying of old methods would ensue, and what a boon would it not be for the concert-goer!

The ballades do not next claim our notice by right of opus, for the variations, op. 9, follow the sonata in F minor, ops. 6, 7 and 8 being given over to two sets of six songs and the familiar piano trio in B. But I prefer treating the six books of variations together. The ballades, four in number, are labelled op. 10. The first in D minor has the narrative quality imperatively demanded by the form, but Brahms has his own notions about the time beat, and so we find the first two in common time instead of the usual triple measure. Thus there is a gain in dignity and stateliness. The D minor ballade is rather a lugubrious work divided

into an andante and allegro. The empty fifth harmony in the bass, the slow progression in the treble, gives the theme a mournful and Gaelic character. In runic tones the tale of Herder's Scottish ballade, Edward, is told, and the dead hero home to his love is brought. The section in D, with its triplets, gives us some surcease from the gloom, although there is a peculiarly hollow effect in the triplet imitation in the bass. This ballade is almost sinister in coloring and touches of Brahms's irony are present. It is not a piece for joyous, festive celebrations, but is nevertheless, finely felt, finely wrought music.

The next one in D is almost popular and is very lovely and original. The theme, so gentle, so winning, so heart-felt, is sung in octaves, and although the intervals are not favorable for a legato, yet a perfect legato is demanded. The first page of this ballade must needs loosen the obdurate heart strings of a Finck. The second theme in B minor is in strong contrast rhythmically, in content being stern and imperious. I confess the molto staccato leggiero is a bit of Brahms that always puzzles me. I find analogies in Beethoven, in those mysterious pianissimi in his symphonies and cercertos where the soul is almost freed from the earthly vesture and for a moment hovers about in the twilight of uncertain tonalities and rhythms. Brahms, as Ehlert says, has this gift of catching and imprisoning moods that for want of a better name we call, spiritual. The awe, the awful mystery of the life in us, the life about us, is felt by Beethoven and Brahms and marvellously expressed by them. The reappearance, to give an example of what I mean, of the theme of the scherzo in the last movement of Beethoven's fifth symphony has just such a ghostly effect. Later on I shall quote other instances in Brahms. In the D major ballade the return to the first idea and in the luscious key of B is charming, and the piece ends in soft æolian harmonies. This ballade is a masterpiece in miniature.

The third ballade in B minor is in the nature of an intermezzo. The open fifths in the bass give the piece an ironic tinge, and the figure of the opening recalls instantly to the student a similar one in the E flat minor scherzo. Indeed, to push the simile further, this intermezzo might be almost taken for a sarcastic, an ironic commentary upon the earlier composition. In six-eight time, it is a swinging allegro, and the ethereal hush of the second part is an excellent foil. The fourth ballade in B commends itself to the pianist of moderate ability, for it is not difficult and is very cantabile. Simplicity of idea and treatment is maintained throughout. The middle section is full of intimate feeling and poetic murmurings. It requires a beautiful touch and a mastery of the pedals. These four ballades should be on the piano of every aspiring pianist. They are able illustrations of what Brahms can do in small, concise forms. They must not be compared to the more extended form and more florid content of the Chopin ballades, which are in the main unapproachable. With Brahms there is no suspicion of a set piece; in Chopin the virtuoso often faces us. It is, after all, the German and the Pole, and further commentary would be superfluous.

And now to the piano variations. Brahms is not only the greatest variationist of his times, but with Bach and Beethoven the greatest of all times. Oddly enough, we must join Brahms's name with the two earlier masters whenever we approach the serious, the severe side of the art. I refer to Spitta's pertinent remark about the variation form.

The old variation form, above all, he says, is brought out from the treasures of the old composers, and glorified in his hands. Brahms's variations are something quite different from what had been commonly known by that name. Their prototype is Bach's aria with thirty variations, and this work is an elaboration of the form known as the passacaglia. In this the determining idea is not the addition of

figures or of various accompaniments to the theme or melody, but the persistent identity of the bass. This continues the same through all the variations; upon that, a free treatment is worked out—not, however, excluding an occasional reference to the original melody. Beethoven so far adhered to the usually accepted form as to restrict the supremacy of the bass to alternate use with variations in the melody, and Schumann followed his example. This form was not adopted by other great masters, and even Beethoven and Schumann only occasionally used it. Brahms, so rich in inventive combinations, stands nearer to Bach than to Beethoven, but has much of Beethoven's freer style of treatment. Augmentation or diminution of the phrases forming the theme are a manner of variation never used by Beethoven, and employed by Brahms only in the variations in the two first sonatas, and in the independent Air with Variations, op. 9. In this it is often surprisingly ingenious, but he must have thought the process incompatible with his strict sense of form, just as he gave up changes of key from one variation to the next, which Schumann often used and Beethoven allowed himself only once (op. 34).

The first set of variations made by Brahms is on a theme of Schumann in F sharp minor. It is a beautiful theme, marked Ziemlich Langsam, and is familiar to all Schumann students; for it is, if I remember aright, the first of the Albumblätter. These variations dimly reveal the inexhaustible fancy of the composer. He views his subject from every possible view-point; he sees it as a philosopher, he grimly contemplates it as a cynic; he sings it in mellifluous accents, he plays with it, teases it contrapuntally, and alternately freezes it into glittering stalactites and disperses it in warm, violet-colored vapors. The theme is never lost; it lurks behind formidable ambushes of skips, double notes and octaves, or it slaps you in the face, its voice threatening, its size ten times increased by its harmonic garb. It

wooes, caresses, sighs, smiles, coquets, and sneers—in a word, a modern magician weaves for you the most delightful stories imaginable, all the while damnably distracting your attention and harrowing your nerves by spinning in the air polyphonic cups, saucers, plates and balls, and never letting them for a moment reach the earth.

Louis Ehlert believes that the Brahms variation was begotten by a classical father, the thirty-two variations of Beethoven; and a romantic mother, the Symphonic Studies of Schumann. The comparison is apt enough. The first variation on the F sharp minor theme of Schumann seems more like a quiet restatement of the idea; in the second the bass becomes very important; the third calls for no special mention, but the fourth and fifth are bold, capricious, and the sixth very brilliant; the seventh is very short, but pregnant, and the eighth is superb. A pedal bass supports the faintly whispered theme, which is heard in waving rhythms, as the sobbing of the wind through the trees. In Padewski's strongly individualized Variations in A minor there is a variation built in this fashion, and you may find, in Tschaïkowsky's interesting Variations in F, another example.

In the famous ninth variation of this set we find Brahms indulging in a very delicate and ingenious fancy. He has combined with the original theme the entire arpeggio work of Schumann's little piece in B minor from the Bunten Blättern, op. 99, no. 5. As Spitta says, how thoroughly Brahms had thought out the spirit of the variation is seen in the fact that he is fond of interchanging the modulatory relations of the two phrases of the theme. The place where this generally occurs is at the beginning of the second part; but also in the second half of the first part. The digressions, more or less important, which he admits, are always so chosen that the effect of the newly introduced key approximately answers to that produced by the original key

of the preceding or following phrase. Even the cadenzas appear altered from this point of view.

In the tenth the bass is used in the upper part, and the subject derived from the diminishing to half or quarter notes of the beginning of the subject; the essential harmonies are preserved in the same succession, while the subject is worked out to fill the required measures, so the reflections of the theme are diverse and glancing.

The eleventh variation is brief, but full of meat, and in it the main idea almost disappears in cloudy octaves, in which an occasional middle voice may be faintly discerned. The twelfth is a heart-breaker, and bold to extremes. The coda ends in a whirlwind of skips, and the wonder-working of the Paganini studies is dimly presaged.

No. 13 is in the shape of a toccata in double notes, and is capital; but my favorite variation, over which you may dream soft, summer night dreams, is the next, the fourteenth. This is a true nocturne, and its hesitating tones, over an undulating bass, tell of the dear, dead Chopin, lying near Bellini, in Père la Chaise.

Variation fifteen is in G flat and in the Lydian mode, the coda-finale is as if Brahms feared to part from his theme and took a lingering leave taking. These variations are worthy of the deepest study.

III

The Walzer, op. 39, were not written first for two hands, but for four. The composer arranged them afterward for solo purposes. They are divine specimens of the dance, and I prefer them even to Rubinstein, and that is saying much, for the Russian has left many admirable examples.

Any comparison with the Chopin valse is of course out of the question. Chopin wrote, as Liszt truthfully said, for countesses, and in his aristocratic measures we feel the swirl

of silken skirts, divine the perfume of the fashionable salon and hear the soft pulsations of delicate, half uttered confidences. The room rustles with the patter of beauty's feet, but after all it is a drawing room; not a breath of the open is there.

There are some of the Chopin valses that are not only mediocre, but positively bad. Take the first, the one in E flat, is it not actually vulgar? And the one in A flat that follows is not much better. The A minor valse is elegiac, even unto the Mendelssohnian point. It is when the A flat valse, op. 42, is reached that we get a taste of the true Chopin. This with the one in C sharp minor, the posthumous valse in E minor and the delightfully developed dance in A flat are Chopin at his dancing best. The D flat valse is something to be avoided, simply because of the woful way it has been misrepresented by pianists. I don't allude to double-noting the unfortunate piece, but to the erroneous fashion of playing the first section too fast and the second too slow. Georges Mathias, of Paris, a genuine Chopin pupil, said that the master took the tempo rather moderately, making an accelerando on the up run, ending with a little click on B flat. The rubato, so M. Mathias declared, was indescribably beautiful; therefore, unless the Chopin tradition is carried out, let the Valse de Chien rest its tiresome little bark in peace. With the E flat nocturne, it has become a nuisance.

The musical content of the Chopin valse is a certain suavity, distinctive grace, charming rhythm and aristocratic melody, and it is safe to say that few of these qualities can be found in the Brahms Walzer. But as is the case with Schubert, Brahms dances more poetically, and always in the open air. Sometimes the round verge of the sun blazes overhead in the blue, and you hear the muscular jolt of large limbed men and women taking their pleasure heartily, then the aromatic night of the forest encompasses you, and

the sound of dancing is heard, but afar. Poetry is in the air and passion too, and exquisite is the sound and exquisite the suggestion.

Take the first dance of the op. 39. It is in the key of B, and harmonized in the lustiest, freest fashion imaginable. It opens boldly, joyously, with the decisiveness we know so well in the préambule to Schumann's Carneval. It is but a page long, and a small page at that, but there is no mistaking its worth.

The second valse in E has an entrancing lilt, marked dolce; it is well named. The mood is nocturnal, the color subdued, but none the less full of glancing richness. Then follow two tiny gems, as precious almost as some of Chopin's preludes. The one is in the warm and neglected key of G sharp minor, the other in E minor. The first has the pulse beat of Chopin, the second is Hungarian and lovely, and the brace of harmonic progressions at the close is worth living for.

If there could be such a thing as a sacred valse, then No. 5 of the series is sacred. In the key of E, you can sense the valse, but the theme is serious to gravity, just as a Chopin scherzo is a tragic poem. One feels like echoing Robert Schumann's "How is gravity to clothe itself if jest goes about in dark veils?"

C sharp major is the key of No. 6, and has a touch of the fantastic element that we find in the variations. No. 7 in C sharp minor-major is full of harmonic variety. My two favorites of the set are the valses in B flat and D minor. Both are poems. The one in B flat is a proof positive of Brahms's "geniality." In a small piano piece by the Russian Liadow, the same melodic and rhythmic idea is utilized; even the pretty modulation from B flat to D flat is not overlooked. Then on the page opposite in the valse in D minor, Brahms pilfers boldly from Schumann. In the Pièces Caractéristiques (Die Davidsbünder) No. 18, in C, certainly

prompted Brahms, but with what ease and variety has he not handled the other man's theme! It is like a sigh, an unshed tear, and is more Brahms than it is Schumann.

By a clever suspension we are at once led to dance No. 10 in G. The next valse in B minor might have been written by Schubert. It is a charming pendant to the Momer Musicale, or is it an impromptu in F minor?

There are sixteen in all and I have briefly indicated the principal ones, although there is yet another in the key of G sharp minor and a delightful one in A flat, No. 15. This has the true tang of Brahms, the amiability, the large, sweet nature, the touch of life that we call universal when we find it in Shakespeare. Brahms is far from being a poet of the universal, for he is too German, lacks marked profile and is more the philosopher than the bard. Yet has he something of fulness of life; the strenuous ideality that is always found in world-poets.

Remember, too, that I am considering the man from the points of view of his piano works. Consider the great German Requiem, the C minor symphony, the D minor piano concerto, before you class this composer as a specialist working within well defined limitations. I dislike playing the part of an advocate when all should be so clear in the Brahms question, but I do so because of his supreme indifference to what any one thought of his theory and practice, and also because of the cloud thrown over him by his warmest enemies and most misguided admirers. That he lives, that he gains continually in strength, and this, too, in spite of the Brahmsianer, is a satisfactory guarantee of his genius.

Let me quote for you what Louis Ehlert—by no means a Brahmsianer—wrote of the Walzer: "Having in time assumed an ordinary and most material character, dance music has been led back to the domain of high art by Schubert and Chopin. Dancing may be accomplished in many

ways: passionately, indifferently, distractedly or symbolically. The symbolic dancer will introduce in his motions the poetic idea underlying the dance; that is, the fleeting, half confidential, and yet not binding, contact of one person with another of the opposite sex, a sort of rhythmic dialogue without words. And Brahms possessed the gift of substantiating his mastery in this field by the charm of half revealed sentiment, by the modest denial of the scarcely uttered confession and by his power of rendering the wildest yearnings speechless with confusion.

"At times, it is true, he handles his subject in a more decided manner, but the most beautiful among his waltzes are those whose cheeks are tinged with blushes. Brahms carried the freshness of youth into his later years, and blushes are peculiarly becoming to him. His sweetest melodies are merely tinted with a rosy hue; they do not possess the deep, summery complexion of Schubert's. The small opus has become the ancestor of a small literature, and many of our contemporary musicians have walked in the way of the Brahms waltzes."

Elsewhere he says of the Love Song Waltzes for mixed quartet, with four-handed piano accompaniment: "Schumann and Chopin have themselves scarcely succeeded in arriving at a more intellectual and poetic form of the dance." And remember Ehlert wrote of Brahms: "His fancy is lacking in melodic tide," and also, "Brahms's music has no profile; . . . by this remark I do not mean absolute censure, for, like Handel, one can have too much profile, too much nose and chin, and too little of the full glance of the eye."

I transcribe all this to show you the impression made upon his doubting contemporaries by this richly gifted composer.

IV

In op. 21 there are two sets of variations—one in D, on an original theme, the second in the same key, on a Hungarian song. They are both excellent preparatory studies for the more famous pair. In them we get the peculiar Brahms technic amply illustrated—for instance, the first variation of the opus. It begins with a characteristic figure in the bass, the harmonic extensions showing how ingeniously Brahms handled the arpeggio, avoiding a tone, accentuating another and gaining new color. There are some interesting variations in this set, No. 7, with its wide intervals; No. 9, another pedal bass effect with huge skips that look like yawning precipices, yet I do not particularly care for the set, although constant study of Brahms reveals new points of interest. The variations on a Hungarian song are even less fruitful in treatment, but will repay study.

When, however, we take up op. 24, variations and fugue on a theme by Handel, we begin to sense the extraordinary fertility of Brahms. The theme itself, in B flat, is a square-toed aria, and what Brahms does with it is most entertaining, ingenious and musicianly. From the very first variation, surely full of humor, we get a view of the possibilities of the variation form. I am not sure but that these variations are more ingenious, less sophisticated, and contain less of the étude than the Paganini variations. As they are occasionally played I shall not go into detailed description of the difficulties, except to say that the entire twenty-five are alive with musical invention and a certain genial feeling, a geniality that eminently suits the ruddy-cheeked tune of Handel. There is the fifth variation in B flat minor, there is the fourth with its bass and treble dialogue, the fourteenth in double sixths and the energetic attack of the nineteenth are all noteworthy.

The fugue is a capital specimen of close treatment, yet in spirit very free. I do not begin to find it as dry as certain of the Beethoven fugues, and it is devilishly tricky.

The variations on the Paganini theme in A minor are frankly studies, but transcendental studies, only fit to be mentioned in company with Liszt's. Apparently the top-notch of virtuosity had been reached and there remained nothing for Brahms to do but let an astonishingly fantastic imagination loose and play pranks that would have caused Schumann to shout with admiration. The very first variation is a subtle compliment to Schumann's toccata, and the second, with the sixths in the left hand, is very trying for players with short-breathed fingers. In the third we get rolling rhythms that excite more than they lull. In the fourth Brahms asks too much of mortal man with a top trill on a chord, the left hand gambolling over the impossible. Then follow some octave studies the reverse of easy, especially the ninth in chords. The eleventh is a veritable toccata; the thirteenth one of the most brilliant and popular of the set. The fourteenth is terrible, exacting and long, for it closes the set. Brahms, to use a faded figure of speech, piles Pelion upon Ossa in the coda.

The second book starts in with a tremendous and exciting study in double notes, and the sudden muscular contractions and expansions caused by alternations of double thirds and octaves is exhausting to any one but a virtuoso. The tenth variation, marked Feroce, energico, exhibits skilful use of arpeggio forms, and the eleventh variation is simply baffling. In the next one we get a breathing spell, one of those green melodic oases in which Brahms proves to you how easy it is for a great, strong soul to be gentle and tender.

It may not be considered amiss here to take a passing glance at some of Brahms's daily studies for the piano. Naturally a man fond of solving abstruse technical prob-

lems, he could scarcely let pass the studies of other composers without considering them in varied aspects. So he has taken Chopin's tender, whispering study in F minor (op. 25), and broken it on the wheel of double sixths and thirds. It may be magnificent technic, but, as Rudyard Kipling would ask: Is it art? It is certainly legitimate experimenting, but I fancy not fit for publication. A flood of imitations have resulted, and in some cases Chopin has suffered exceedingly. Happily the extreme difficulty of the Brahms transcriptions will prevent them from ever becoming as popular as much of Chopin. They are written for a parterre of virtuosi.

The étude after Chopin is entertaining for the fingers, and of more educational value than Franz Bendel's treatment of sixths in his B flat minor study, the étude Heroique.

But what shall I say of the Weber rondo, the so-called perpetual movement, topsy-turvied by Brahms, and actually played by him in concert? It is very bewildering and finally laughable. As a left hand study in velocity it is supreme. He has subjected a presto by Bach to two rather drastic treatments, and the famous chaconne he arranged for the left hand alone. This latter has one good point, it can be played easily by both hands, and the immortal piece enjoyed, for with Bach, Brahms is reverent to a degree.

The fifty-one studies recently published are little gold mines for the student of Brahms. They are more musical than Tausig's daily studies and also more normal. In them may be found all the norms of Brahms's technical figuration, the mixed rhythms, the curious extensions, the double notes in thirds and sixths, with all manner of ingenious fingering. Examine the fifth study, occupying but a page, and you will find the key to one of the most formidable difficulties in the Paganini studies. It is in broken octaves, arranged in scale fashion and taken at a rapid tempo. Various

examples will be found of this figure. Then there are single finger exercises, skips, scales and interlocked octaves and chords. Both books are of the highest importance. Max Vogrich says that the title of the studies should be A Hospital for Disabled Virtuosi.

The twenty-one Hungarian dances were originally arranged for the piano and afterward transferred to the orchestra. They are so familiar in their orchestral garb that I need hardly allude to them except to say that some of them are not so well adapted for the piano. But there are a half dozen that will outlive all the Liszt rhapsodies, for Brahms has penetrated more deeply the Hungarian spirit, has caught color, swing, perfume, mad melancholy and reckless joy without a suspicion of the glittering embroidery of Liszt's virtuoso-like paraphrases. These dances of Brahms can be made to sound superbly if played by a pianist with temperament, above all a pianist who has in his veins Magyar blood.

I wish I had been in Leipsic in January, 1859, among the big-wigs of music and listened to the first performance of the D minor, the first piano concerto, played by its composer, Johannes Brahms. The Gewandhaus must have been disgusted by "the symphony with piano obbligato," as the critics called it; curiously enough, this work has set the pace for the modern concerto, of which Eugene d'Albert's two works in B minor and E major are extreme examples.

Yet carefully read the D minor concerto to-day, and much of its so-called obscurity vanishes. When I first heard the work played by Wilhelmine Claus, an excellent artist, I confess that, fresh from "Chopinism," this concerto sounded mournfully vague and uncertain. Its seriousness was, however, not its only drawback to popularity. "Where," asked a bewildered public, accustomed to the panderings of "pianism," "where are our trills, our scales, our runs all over the landscape of the keyboard? Give us our

cadenza, our big triumphal entrance, and our brilliant finale, and we will endure a few bars from the orchestra"; bars, let it be said, that about suffice to allow the solo player to settle in his seat, recover his wind and nerve and warm his fingers.

But Brahms thought differently from the critic and public; to him a piano concerto was the sonata form amplified, and the piano, unless it had something to say, must hold its tongue between its burnished ivory teeth. Do not, however, imagine that the pianist has a few doleful chords to play. There are difficulties enough, and of a trying and unusual order. As for the seriousness of the work we cannot deny that it is dark at times, especially in the orchestra, and full of the strenuous, solid sincerity of the composer. I cannot help thinking here of what Hadow wrote for the benefit of those who find Brahms too grave and earnest:—

> The same may be said of Æschylus and Dante, of Milton, of Wordsworth. . . . Music is an art of at least the same dignity as poetry or painting; it admits of similar distinctions, it appeals to similar faculties, and in it, also, the highest field is that occupied with the most serious issues. . . . If we are disposed to find fault with Brahms because the greater part of his music is grave and earnest, let us at least endeavor to realize how such a criticism would sound if it were directed against the Divina Commedia, or the Agamemnon, or Paradise Lost.

For Ehlert the D minor concerto was "his first crusade into the promised land of art." He furthermore finds it penetrating, rugged and unpleasant, but of "undisguised grandeur. . . . Its score represents the act of divorce between the pianist Brahms and the universal composer."

The first tutti covers all but five pages; but how entrancingly enters the opening subject! I find it simply captivating and without a trace of harshness. Of course if you will thump the piano like some pianists who believe that both Bach and Brahms are dry, pedantic music-worms, you can-

not expect any response full of musical and intellectual charm. And let me say now that half the harm done to Bach and Brahms is that so successfully accomplished by pianists who fail to discern the exquisite musical quality of these composers. Give the public less arithmetic and more emotional and tonal variety, and presently you may find Bach and Brahms ending a programme instead of escorting a reluctant audience to its seat.

On page eleven of the concerto stands the second theme of the first movement in F. Show me anything lovelier, more suave, even in Mozart, and I will be surprised. It is the earnest and strict polyphonic treatment throughout and not any paucity of melodic material that irritates those that still believe music is made, like bonbons, to tickle the palate and soothe digestion. There is admirable logic in the working out section and plenty of finger, wrist and arm breaking technic. The last two pages—pages thirty-two and thirty-three—coming as they do, will force any strong musical man to exert himself.

The second movement, an adagio, gives us after Brahms the thinker, Brahms the poet. It is in the key of D and could only have been conceived by a man of the highest musical ideas and deep feeling. There is an episode on page thirty-six that gives the lie to the critics with strabismic hearing. It is in melody and harmony, simply golden. The rondo is in strict form, full of classic glee, and very effective, even in the old-fashioned piano sense. It demands enduring, honest fingers, and much breadth of style.

Properly speaking, the second piano concerto in B flat, op. 83, belongs to my so-called second manner of the composer. In it there is less of the philosophic brooding of the first concerto. It is more passionate, more fluent, more direct and more dramatic. It shows the same unerring grasp of construction; but there is, throughout, more of the musician of the world, less of the introspective and con-

templative poet. It is brilliant—especially the passage work—for the piano. The enunciation of the first theme by the horn is memorable; beautiful, too, is the violoncello solo in the slow movement, while the Hungarian finale contains some of the most charming pages written for piano and orchestra. It is dashing and piquant, and the second theme is truly Magyar.

This concerto is always sure to be more popular than the first, with its Faust-like questionings. Brahms has dared to be worldly and less recondite for once.

V

It seems to me that the pièce de résistance of the Brahms piano music is the Paganini Variations; those famous, awe-some, o'er-toppling, huge, fantastic, gargoylean variations erected, planned and superimposed by Brahms upon a char-acteristic theme of Paganini.

Brahms and Paganini! Was ever so strange a couple in harness? Caliban and Ariel, Jove and Puck. The stolid German, the vibratile Italian! Yet fantasy wins, even if brewed in a homely Teutonic kettle. Brahms has taken the little motif—a true fiddle motif—of Paganini, and tossed it ball-wise in the air, and while it spiral spins and bathes in the blue, he cogitates, and his thought is marvellously fine spun. Webs of gold and diamond spiders and the great round sun splashing about, and then deep divings into the bowels of the firmament and growlings and subterrene rum-blings, and all the while the poor maigre Paganini, a mere palimpsest for the terrible old man of Hamburg, from whose pipe wreathed musical smoky metaphysics, and whose eyes are fixed on the Kantean categories.

These diabolical variations, the last word in the technical literature of the piano, are also vast spiritual problems. To play them requires fingers of steel, a heart of burning lava

and the courage of a lion. You see, these variations are an obsession with me.

Now take up the Chopin Preludes, and the last, a separate one, op. 45, in the key of C sharp minor. It begins with an idea that Mendelssohn employs in his Song Without Words in A minor, "Regret," I think, is the fanciful name given it by the publishers; but play until you come to the thirteenth bar, and, behold, you are landed in the middle of Brahms. I do not mean to say that Brahms copied Chopin, but the mood and its physical presentation are identical with some of the music of the later Brahms, the Brahms of the second period. The most curious part about this coincidence is that the ten bars that follow do not sound like Chopin, but Brahms—oh, so Brahmsian, that bitter-sweet lingering, that spiritual reverie in which the musical idea is gently propelled as if in some elusive dream. Then there are the extended chords, the shifting harmonic hues, the very bars are built up like Brahms. Of course Brahms would have been Brahms without Chopin; he really owes the Pole less than he owes Schumann, nevertheless here we are confronted with a startling similarity of theme and treatment.

I fancied that Bach anticipated every one in modern music, but Chopin anticipating Brahms is almost in the nature of a delicate, ironical jest; yet it is not more singular than Beethoven anticipating Schumann and Chopin in the adagio of the sonata, op. 106, and in the arioso dolente of the sonata, op. 110.

There is nothing new under the sun, said some venerable polyphonic pundit, in omphalic contemplation on the banks of the Ganges, and music amply illustrates this eld saying.

But to op. 76, Clavierstücke von Johannes Brahms. This opus is divided into eight numbers, capriccios and intermezzi; for the composer disliked excessively giving his music set names, although it seems to me that with his intense Teutonism he might have followed Schumann's example

and avoided the Italian nomenclature as much as possible.

Then again these little pieces are not always well named, for the rhapsodies are seldom rhapsodies in the conventional sense, and the intermezzi are, I suppose, intended to fill in, as the name indicates, some intermediate place; but as a matter of fact they do not, for they are often bunched together. It is to be supposed that Brahms attached some intellectual significance to these titles that is caviare to the general.

The first capriccio of op. 76 is in the key of F sharp minor, the brief, restless introductory suggesting, but rather faintly, Schumann. The principal melody is structurally in the style of Mendelssohn, but the harmonization and development of a sort that would have repelled the gentle Felix, who disliked anything bristling or forbidding. The mood-color is gloomy, even to despair. There is a ray of light in the diminished chord that preludes the return of the theme, which is treated in inversion—a characteristic trick of Brahms. Near the close the melody is sounded in quarter-noted chords and most resolutely, but soon melts away into vaporous figuration, the piece ending in the major, but without a ray of sunshine.

The second capriccio is the familiar one in B minor, played staccato throughout, and a piquant and almost agreeable piano composition. Do you know that I never hear it without being reminded of the fourth number in Schumann's Die Davidsbündler, which is also in B minor. It is as if Brahms took that syncopated page and built over it his capricco, with its capricious staccati and ingenious harmonic changes. Of course the resemblance vanishes after the third bar; it is really more spiritual than actual.

Interesting it is to follow the permutations of the composer. On page nine there is a refreshing and perfectly sane modulation from E major to F, and the return to the subject is cleverly managed. The frisky yet somewhat sa-

turnine character is maintained to the end, and the doubling up on page twelve is very effective. A genuine piano piece is this B minor capriccio.

We now come to the lovely A flat intermezzo, which occassionally strays in an uneasy fashion on the concert stage. A few pianists play this tender wreath of moonbeams and love, but either too slow or too fast. To play Brahms sentimentally is to slay Brahms; yet this charming intermezzo in A flat must not be taken too slow. It exhales an odor of purity, of peace, that is not quite untroubled, and nothing sweeter can be imagined than the dolce on the first page that follows a ritenuto and introduces a break in the melody. Its two pages are the two pages of a masterpiece. They give us Brahms at his best and in his most lovable mood.

The next intermezzo is more shy and more diffident. Marked allegretto grazioso, its graciousness is veiled by a hesitating reserve which further on becomes almost painful. Mark where the double notes begin, mark the progression and its dark downward inflection. But it is a beautiful bit of writing, with some of the characteristics of a nocturne, but full of questionings, full of enigmatic pain. Brahms, too, suffered severely from Weltschmerz.

The second book of op. 76 is a distinct advance in mastery of material, in the expression and realization of moods almost too recondite and remote. The C sharp minor capriccio which begins the book is more lengthy and more ambitious than any in the work. It is an agitated, passionate composition, driving through darkness and storm without relief, until a silent poco tranquillo is reached; but the point of repose is soon abandoned and the turmoil begins anew and the ending is full of gloom and fierceness. I catch Schumann in spots; for example, near the end of the second line on the second page, when a rank modulation stares you in the face, but with the eyes of Robert the Fantastic. The tempest-like character of the capriccio is marked. It is a true soul-storm in which the spirit, buffeted and drenched

by the wind and wave of adversity, is almost subdued; but the harsh and haughty coda shows indomitable courage at the last. It is a powerful companion picture for Schumann's Aufschwung.

Then follow in the next intermezzo perfect calm, perfect repose of mind and body. In the slow moving triplets Brahms indicates those curves of quiet that enfold us when we are at one with ourselves, with nature. Indescribably lovely is the first page of this intermezzo. Even the section in F sharp minor is gracious and without a hint of the tragic. The piece ends in A major stillness.

The next number is also an intermezzo, and with my absurd feeling for similarities I hear in it an echo of Chopin's F minor nocturne. The resemblance is not as rhythmic as it is melodic. For gray days this intermezzo was written; go play it when the sun is holding high and heated revelry in the heavens and you will feel, rather than see, a shadow cross your inner vision. It is our pessimistic Brahms again, and the mood for the moment is almost one of mild self-torture. A nocturne in gray, not too profound, too poignant, rather a note of melancholy is sounded, a thin edge of light that stipples the gloom with really more doubt than despair.

The eighth and last number of the opus is a capriccio, a genuine, whirling, fantastic capriccio. It is not easy to play; needing light, sure fingers and a light, gay spirit. In the second section we encounter a melody of the later Brahms type. It delights in seizing remote keys, or rather contiguous keys, that are widely disparate in relationship and forcing them to consort, the result being perversely novel and sometimes startling. Some of the modulatory work is very interesting, particularly the enharmonic progressions at the bottom of the second page. The capriccio fitly closes a volume of original and suggestive piano music, but music that is sealed to the amateur searching for showy or mere mellifluous effects. After you have played

Bach and Beethoven, after you have exhausted—if such a thing is possible—Chopin and Schumann, you will perhaps grasp the involuted and poetical music contained in op. 76 of Brahms.

At last we reach op. 79, the two rhapsodies much talked of, much wrangled over and seldom played.

The first rhapsody is in B minor and is as unrhapsodic as you can well imagine. It is drastic, knotty, full of insoluble ideas, the melodic contour far from melting and indeed hardly plastic. The mood is sternly Dorian and darkling. It is the intellectual Brahms who confronts us with his supreme disdain for what we like or dislike; it is Brahms giving utterance to bitter truths, and only when he reaches the section in D minor does he relax and sing in smoother accents; but those common chords in B flat ruthlessly interrupt the Norse-like melody, and we are once again launched on the sea of troubled argument. This B minor rhapsody always sounds to me as if its composer were trying to prove something algebraic, all the while knitting his awful brows in the most logical manner. There is little rhapsody in it, but of intellectual acrimoniousness much. The second melody has an astringency that is very grateful to mental palates weary of the sweets of other composers.

This melody in B is another typical one of the sort referred to above. You could swear it is Brahms, even if heard in a dark room with your ears closed—to be very Irish! The merging of this theme into the first is characteristically accomplished, and the old dispute is renewed. As acrid as decaying bronze is this rhapsody, and yet its content is intellectual and lofty, the subsidiary melody in D minor being the one bit of relief throughout. There are scales in the piece, but surely not for display, and the regularly constructed coda is very interesting. This first rhapsody is for the head rather than the heart.

But the second in G minor is magnificent; more ballade-

like than rhapsodic, yet a distinct narrative and one about which I love to drape all manner of subjective imaginings. The bold modulation of the theme, its swiftness, fervor and power are very fascinating. I love to think of my favorite, Browning's Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came. With what mastery and economy of means are not the most dramatic effects compassed! Begin with the chord in E minor so rapidly translated into G minor, and thence onward. You can fairly revel in the exhibition of tragic force, in the free, firm, bold handling of a subject stripped of all musical verbiage and reduced to its lowest mathematical term. The working out is famous in its intensity, in its grip; never for a moment is the theme lost, never for a moment is subsidiary material introduced. There is no padding, and the great, gaunt skeleton of the structure would be exposed if it were not for the rush, the color, the dynamic density of the mass. A wonderful, glorious, bracing tone-picture in which Brahms, the philosopher, burns the boats of his old age and becomes for the time a youthful Faust in search of a sensation. A hurricane of emotion that is barely stilled at the end, this rhapsody reminds me of the bardic recital of some old border ballad. In it there is tragedy and the cry of bruised hearts; in it there is fierce action, suffocating passion and a letting loose of the elements of the soul. It is an epic for the keyboard, and before its cryptic tones we shudder and are amazed!

VI

Op. 116 is made up of two books of small pieces called Fantaisien and divided into capriccios and intermezzi, seven in all. A bold, restless capriccio, a presto in D minor, begins the set. Here is the later Brahms with a vengeance. Cross accents, harmonic cross-relations, and what Hadow calls organic unity in the emotional aspect with organic diversity in the choice of keys. Very daring, very difficult is

this energetic composition. In the seventeenth bar we find the Hungarian creeping in, in the characteristic Brahms style, but it only peeps at you for a few bars and is lost in the hurly-burly of mixed rhythms and tonalities. The entire character of the piece is resolute, vigorous and powerful. It is finely developed both in the emotional and intellectual aspects.

The intermezzo in A minor which follows is lovely. In its native simplicity it is almost as noteworthy as the introduction to the Chopin Ballade in F major-A minor. Its sweet melancholy has the resigned quality that Maeterlinck speaks of when describing an old man who sits serenely in his chair and listens to the spiritual messages in the air; sits humbly, peacefully, with sweetly folded hands, and awaits —awaits what? The tranquillity of this nocturne is unbroken even in the second part, where a whispering figure in the treble enlaces the theme. It is another of those vaporish mysteries, those shadowy forms seen at dusk near the gray, thin edges of forests. Whether from caprice or logic Brahms makes a chromatic détour of an entire line before the coda. It is as interesting as it is unusual. This intermezzo is for pure, pious souls, and it is not very young music. It contains an unusual sequence of chords of the seventh in two parts, the fifths being omitted.

Of different calibre is the capriccio in G minor. No. 3 of the set. Passionate, agitated and intensely moving is the first theme, and the second in E flat major recalls to Mr. Fuller-Maitland the style of the early piano sonatas. But there is freer modulation and more economy of material. Brahms was not a young man when he wrote this opus, yet for the most part it is astonishingly youthful and elastic. There is fire and caprice in this composition that make it extremely effective for the concert stage.

More remote, but exquisitely tender and intimate, is the intermezzo which begins the second book of op. 116. It is

my favorite number, and its caressing accents set you dreaming. In the entire range of piano literature I cannot recall a more individual and more beautiful piece of music, and I am fully conscious that I am writing these words and all they implicate.

Solemnly the triolen are sung in the bass, but the treble phrase that follows is purely feminine and questioning. So slender are the outlines of this piece that they seem to wave and weave in the air. The pianissimi are almost too spiritual to translate into tone; and yet throughout, despite the stillness of the music, its rich quiet, there is no hint of the sensuous. The luxuriance of color is purely of the spirit—the spirit that broods over the mystery and beauty of life. Brahms' music is never sexless; but at times he seems to withdraw from the dust, the flesh-pots and the noise of life, and erects in his heart a temple wherein may be worshipped Beauty.

Of ineffable, haunting beauty is this intermezzo; and it is worth a wilderness of some sonatas and loudly trumpeted rhapsodies by men acclaimed of great reputation. The ending is benign.

The next intermezzo, in E minor, is, I confess, gnomic for me. It is marked andante con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento. It is in six-eight time, and built on phrases of two notes. Intimate, yes, but the intimacy is all on the side of the composer, for you must long pursue this cryptic bit of writing before you begin to unravel its complicated meanings. The composition is extremely original, extremely poetic; more like a sigh, a half-uttered complaint of a melancholy soul. To play it you must first be a poet, then a pianist.

The next intermezzo is really a minuet. It is in E, and finely differentiated from its companions of the volume.

A capriccio, also in D minor, closes this work. It is quite brilliant, and, oddly enough, contains a full-fledged bravoura

passage, in the nature of a cadenza, and after the most approved modern manner. It, too, would be extremely effective in concert.

Op. 117, three intermezzi, leads off with a delicious cradle song, which I cannot quite agree with Max Vogrich, as being fit to lull to slumber a royal babe. Indeed, the child rocked to sleep by Brahms is not so aristocratic nor so delicate as the infant of the Chopin Berçeuse but it is just as precious, even if homelier. The character of the music is confessedly Scottish, and has for a motto Herder's "Schlaf sanft, mein kind, schlaf sanft und schön!" The harmonies are thick, crowded, and the melody charmingly naïve and childlike. One might reasonably expect from Brahms the vision of some intellectual looking baby, its skull covered with metaphysical bumps and from its mouth issuing sounds of senile wisdom. But this is not the case, for it is a real lullaby we listen to, even if the second section is darker than one expects. The return of the subject with the octave in the upper voice is well managed, and the composition ends in cooing repose.

An intermezzo in B flat minor follows, and after playing and digesting it let me hear no more complaints about Brahms' style being "unpianistic." This number has been called Schumannish, but the comparison is a surface one. Its pages are truly Brahms, and very difficult it is to play in its insolent, airy ease.

The last intermezzo of the book in C sharp minor is of sterner stuff. Fuller-Maitland finds in it a suggestion of the finale of Brahms' third symphony. For me it is most exotic, and has a flavor of the Asiatic in its naked, monophonic, ballad-like measures. There is an evident narrative of sorrowful mien, and you encounter a curious refrain in A, as if one expostulated at the closing of some gruesome statement. Of weighty import is this piece, and in it there is smothered irony and slightly veiled suffering, and in it

there stalks an apparition of woe, of ennui. Page fourteen shows the hand of a master.

There are some who find this op. 117 a distinct gain over the previous work. I cannot truthfully say that I appreciate this criticism, for both volumes contain gems of the purest. Temperament has naturally its own preferences. I have broadly indicated my favorite numbers, and perhaps next year may discover new beauties in the compositions that now fail to make a strong personal appeal. Certain it is that no number should be slighted.

We now near the end, for only op. 118 and op. 119 remain to be considered. The first intermezzo in A minor of the former opus starts off in an exultant mood—a mood of joyful anticipation. In it you are glad to be alive, to breathe the tonic air, to be smothered in the sunshine. Tell me not in doleful numbers that Johannes Brahms cannot be optimistic, cannot hitch his wagon to a star, cannot fight fate. There is passionate intensity and swift motion in this intermezzo. While playing it you are billowed up by the consciousness of power and nobility of soul. The tonality is most diverting and varied.

The succeeding intermezzo is in F minor, and is andante. A very graciously pretty piano piece it is, and well within the grasp of a moderate technic. The melodic material is copious and rich, and the harmonies very grateful. For example, play the F sharp section and the following measures after the double bar in F sharp major; how genial, what resource in modulatory tactics, what appreciation of diversity in treatment!

A stirring and royal ballade in G minor follows. It is Brahms of the masculine gender, the warlike, impetuous recounter of brave deeds and harsh contest. Although the key coloring is gloomy, there is too much action, spirit and bravery in the ballade for gloom to perch long on the banners of the composer. A wonderful second subject in B in-

terrupts the rush of the battle, which is soon resumed. Even its pauses are brilliant.

The fourth intermezzo in A flat has quite a savor of the rococo, with its gentle theme and response. Something of the Old World hovers in its rustling bars, the workmanship of which is very ingenious, especially in the management of the basses in the second part. There is a tiny current of agitation in this intermezzo, despite its delicacy of contour, its lightness of treatment.

No. 5 is a romance suffused with idyllic feeling. There is atmosphere and there is the heart quality, a quality lacking in most modern composers. A very grateful composition, simple and serene, is this romance.

E flat minor is the key of the last intermezzo of op. 118, and a trying composition it is, requiring nimble fingers, fleet fingers and a light, strong wrist. The idea reminds me of one of Brahms's earlier pieces, a mere kernel of a figure, which is expanded, amplified, broadened, deepened by the composer at will. It is full of fantastic poetry, and there is sweep and vision in the composition, which has a ring of dolor and is full of the sombreness of a sad, strong soul.

Op. 119 ends the Brahms music for the piano. The daily studies were doubtlessly written before. But the four pieces that comprise op. 119 may be said to be practically the last music for the instrument he loved so faithfully. There is no falling off in inspiration or workmanship. The idea and its expression are woven in one strand; there is much polishing of phrase and no lack of robustness.

The opening number is in B minor, an intermezzo, an adagio, and full of reverent, sedate music. Since Beethoven no one can vie with Brahms in writing a slow, sober movement; one in which the man, moral, intellectual and physical, girds up his loins, conserves his forces and says his greatest and noblest. The sustained gravity, the pro-

found feeling never mellows into the pathetic fallacy, and of the academic there is not a trace. This adagio is deeply moving.

The next intermezzo in E minor is of extreme loveliness; its poco agitato is the rustling of the leaves in the warm west wind, but they are flecked by the sunshine. A tremulous sensibility informs this andantino, and its bars are stamped by genius.

Fancy the gayest, blithest intermezzo, marked "joyfully" and you will hear the enchanting one in C. The theme is in the middle voice, and the elasticity, sweetness and freedom throughout are simply delightful. It is three pages of undefiled happiness, and only to be compared to that wonderful rhythmic study in A flat by Chopin, the supplementary study in the Fetis method. But Chopin is so sad and Brahms so merry, yet the general architectonic is not dissimilar.

A very Schumannish and vigorous rhapsodie in E flat closes the set, and is in all probability the last piano piece penned by the composer. In it Brahms returns to an early love, Schumann, and there are echoes of the march of the Davidsbündler in the beginning; no one but Brahms could have written the section in C minor or A flat. This rhapsodie is for me not as interesting as the one in G minor, but it is brilliant, and requires wrists of steel.

One who is better qualified to speak on the subject than myself, Mr. Max Vogrich, made the following suggestions as to the order in which these pieces may be played in concert. He writes:—

As the pianist cannot possibly play all twenty pieces in one concert, he must perforce undertake the painful task of selection. Every concert player knows that he can never win over his audience to sympathy, unless himself in fullest sympathy with the compositions which he performs. He will therefore play op. 116 through, and find in the very first number (Capriccio) an exquisite and highly effective piece, teeming with trying octave passages. If he will, he can sufficiently

exhibit his technic—and his muscular fortitude—in this number. No. 2 (Intermezzi) and No. 3 (Capriccio) will strike him as less effective. But in No. 4 (Intermezzo) he will discover a gem of the first water, an adagio enchanting in its wondrous sonority—a study in tone. The two next following intermezzi, again, will afford less complete gratification by reason of their overcharged seriousness, also the Capriccio, conceived somewhat in the spirit of a study, and forming the close of op. 116. Quickly taking up op. 117 (Three Intermezzi), the player opens it at No. 1, a slumber song, but one excelling, in depth of feeling, delicacy and absorbedness of mood, anything ever produced in this class of poetry, Schumann's Träumerei excepted. It was penned by a king, and only a king should play it to lull to slumber a royal babe.

Would anyone be moved to tears by pure music, let him listen to the two succeeding intermezzi, especially the last, which is fitted to bring sentimental souls to the verge of despair. Brahms must have experienced much evil in his life! Finally, our growingly enthusiastic pianist reaches op. 118 and op. 119. And now he cannot tear himself away from the piano. No further thought of concert or audience disturbs him now; nor can he devote a thought to careful selection.

He further remarks that:

> Since the days of the Fantasiestücke the Kinderscenen, the Kreisleriana and the novelletten, that is, since more than half a century, the entire range of piano literature has had nothing to show which could be even remotely compared in intellectual import with these twenty pieces by Brahms.

Brahms has the individual voice, and in his piano music his almost Spartan simplicity sometimes unmasks the illusory quality of the instrument. Yet, I protest if you tell me that he does not write Klaviermässig. His technics are peculiar, but they make the piano sound beautiful; an eloquent tone is needed for Brahms, and your ten fingers must be as ten flexible voices. He never writes salon music, with its weak, vapid, affected mien. You needs must play much Chopin and Liszt, for too much Brahms makes the fingers sluggish, that is sluggish for the older and more rapid-fingered composers.

Touching on the content of his piano music we find much

variety. He has felt the pessimism of his times, but his ideals were noble, and no man could prefer Fielding as an author and not be robust in temperament. He is often enigmatic and hard to decipher. Often and purposely he seems to encage himself in a hedge of formidable quickset, but once penetrate it and you find blooming the rarest flowers, whose perfume is delicious. To me this is the eternal puzzle; that Brahms, the master of ponderous learning, can yet be so tender, so innocent of soul, so fragile, so childlike. He must have valiantly protected his soul against earthly smudging to keep it so pure, so sweet to the very end. I know little of his life, except that he was modest to gruffness, that he loved beer, the society of women and good cooking. Very material all these, but the man was nevertheless a great poet and a great musical thinker.

His piano music is gay, is marmoreal in its repose, is passionate, is humorous, is jolly, is sad, is depressing, is morbid, recondite, poetic, fantastic and severe. He pours into the elastic form of the sonata hot romantic passion, and in the loosest textured smaller pieces he can be as immovable as bronze, as plastic as clay. He is sometimes frozen by grief and submerged by thought, but he is ever fascinating, for he has something to say and knows how to say it in an individual way. Above all he is profoundly *human* and touches humanity at many contacts.

Let me conclude by quoting from that just critic of Brahms, Louis Ehlert: "It is characteristic of his nature that he was born in a Northern seaport, and that his father was a contrabassist. Sea air and basses, these are the ground elements of his music. Nowhere is there to be found a Southern luxuriance, amid which golden fruits smile upon every bough, nor that superabundance of blissful exuberance that spreads its fragrant breath over hill and dale. Now here, however, on the other hand, may there be met that enervating self-absorption, renunciation of ef-

fort or Southern brooding submission to fate. . . . He neither dazzles nor does he conquer with an assault. Slowly but surely he wins all those hearts that demand from art not only that it shall excite, but also that it be filled with sacred fire and endowed with the lovely proportions of the beautiful."

Brahms is indeed an artist of the beautiful and nowhere is this better exemplified than in his piano music.

VI

A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

HENRY BEYLE-STENDHAL

I

The fanciful notion that psychical delicacy is accompanied by a corresponding physical exterior should have received a death-blow in the presence of Henry Beyle, better known as Stendhal. Chopin, Shelley, Byron, and Cardinal Newman did not in personal appearance contradict their verse, prose and music; but Stendhal, possessing an exquisite sensibility, was, as Hector Berlioz cruelly wrote in his Memoirs: "A little pot-bellied man with a spiteful smile, who tried to look grave." Sainte-Beuve is more explicit. "Physically his figure, though not short, soon grew thick-set and heavy, his neck short and full-blooded. His fleshy face was framed in dark curly hair and whiskers, which before his death were assisted by art. His forehead was fine: the nose turned up, and somewhat Calmuck in shape. His lower lip, which projected a little, betrayed his tendency to scoff. His eyes were rather small but very bright, deeply set in their cavities, and pleasing when he smiled. His hands, of which he was proud, were small and daintily shaped. In the last years of his life he grew heavy and apoplectic. But he always took great pains to conceal the symptoms of physical decay even from his own friends."

Henri Monnier, who caricatured him, apparently in a gross manner, denied that he had departed far from his model. Some one said that Stendhal looked like an apothe-

cary—Homais, presumably, or M. Prudhomme. His maternal grandfather, Doctor Gagnon, assured him when a youth that he was ugly, but he consolingly added that no one would reproach him for his ugliness. The piercing and brilliant eye that like a mountain lake could be both still and stormy, his eloquent and ironical mouth, pugnacious bearing, Celtic profile, big shoulders, and well-modelled leg made an ensemble, if not alluring, at least striking. No man with a face capable of a hundred shades of expression can be ugly. Furthermore, Stendhal was a charming *causeur,* bold, copious, witty. With his conversation, he drolly remarked, he paid his way into society. And this demigod or monster, as he was alternately named by his admirers and enemies, could be the most impassioned of lovers. His life long he was in love; Prosper Mérimée declares he never encountered such furious devotion to love. It was his master passion. Not Napoleon, not his personal ambitions, not even Italy, were such factors in Stendhal's life as his attachments. His career was a sentimental education. This ugly man with the undistinguished features was a haughty cavalier, an intellectual Don Juan, a tender, sighing swain, a sensualist, and ever lyric where the feminine was concerned. But once seated, pen in hand, the wise, worldly cynic was again master. "My head is a magic-lantern," he said. And his literary style is on the surface as unattractive as were the features of the man; the inner ear for the rhythms and sonorities of prose was missing. That is the first paradox in the Beyle-Stendhal case.

Few writers in the nineteeth century were more neglected; yet, what a chain of great critics his work begot. Commencing with Goethe in 1818, who, after reading Rome, Naples, and Florence, wrote that the Frenchman attracted and repulsed him, interested and annoyed him, but it was impossible to separate himself from the book until its last page. What makes the opinion remarkable is that

Goethe calmly noted Stendhal's plagiarism of his own Italian Journey. About 1831 Goethe was given Le Rouge et le Noir and told Eckermann of its worth in warm terms. After Goethe another world-hero praised Stendhal's La Chartreuse de Parme: Balzac literally exploded a bouquet of pyrotechnics, calling the novel a masterpiece of observation, and extolling the Waterloo picture. Sainte-Beuve was more cautious. He dubbed Stendhal a "romantic hussar," and said that he was devoid of invention; a literary Uhlan, for men of letters, not for the public. Shortly after his sudden death, M. Bussière wrote in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of Stendhal's "clandestine celebrity." Taine's trumpet-call in 1857 proclaimed him as the great psychologue of his century. And later, in his English Literature, Taine wrote: "His talents and ideas were premature, his admirable divinations not understood. Under the exterior of a conversationalist and a man of the world Stendhal explained the most esoteric mechanisms—a scientist who noted, decomposed, deduced; he first marked the fundamental causes of nationality, climate, temperament; he was the naturalist who classified and weighed forces and taught us to open our eyes." Taine was deeply influenced by Stendhal; read carefully his Italian Pilgrimage, and afterward Thomas Graindorge. He so persistently preached Stendhalism—*beylisme,* as its author preferred to term his vagrant philosophy—that Sainte-Beuve reproved him. Melchior de Vogüé said that Stendhal's heart had been fabricated under the Directory and from the same wood as Barras and Talleyrand. Brunetière saw in him the perfect expression of romantic and anti-social individualism. Caro spoke of his "serious blague," while Victor Hugo found him "somniferous." But Mérimée, though openly disavowing discipleship, acknowledged privately the abiding impression made upon him by the companionship of Beyle. Much of Mérimée is Stendhal better composed, better written.

About 1880 Zola, searching a literary pedigree for his newly-born Naturalism, pitched upon Stendhal to head the movement. The first Romantic—he employed the term Romanticism before the rest—the first literary Impressionist, the initiator of Individualism, Stendhal forged many formulas, was a matrix of *genres,* literary and psychologic. Paul Bourget's Essays in Contemporary Psychology definitely placed Beyle in the niche he now occupies. This was in 1883. Since then the swelling chorus headed by Tolstoy, Georg Brandes, and the amiable fanatics who exhumed at Grenoble his posthumous work, have given to the study of Stendhal fresh life. We see how much Nietzsche owed to Stendhal; see in Dostoïevsky's Raskolnilikow—Crime and Punishment—a Russian Julien Sorel; note that Bourget, from Le Disciple to Sensations d'Italie, is compounded of his forerunner, the dilettante and cosmopolitan who wrote Promenades dans Rome and Lamiel. What would Maurice Barrès and his "culte du Moi" have been without Stendhal —who employed before him the famous phrase "deracination"? Amiel, sick-willed thinker, did not alone invent: "A landscape is a state of soul"; Stendhal had spoken of a landscape not alone sufficing; it needs a moral or historic interest. Before Schopenhauer he described Beauty as a promise of happiness; and he invented the romance of the petty European Principality. Meredith followed him, as Robert Louis Stevenson in his Prince Otto patterned after Meredith. The painter-novelist Fromentin mellowed Stendhal's procedure; and dare we conceive of Meredith or Henry James composing their work without having had a complete cognizance of Beyle-Stendhal? The Egoist is *beylisme* of a superior artistry; while in America Henry B. Fuller shows sympathy for Beyle in his Chevalier Pensieri-Vani and its sequel. Surely the Prorege of Arcopia had read the Chartreuse. And with Edith Wharton the Stendhal touch is not absent. In England, after the dull

essay by Hayward (prefixed to E. P. Robbin's excellent translation of Chartreuse), Maurice Hewlett contributed an eloquent introduction to a new edition of the Chartreuse and calls him "a man cloaked in ice and fire." Anna Hampton Brewster was possibly the first American essayist to introduce to us Stendhal in her St. Martin's Summer. Saintsbury, Dowden, Benjamin Wells, Count Lützow have since written of him; and in Germany the Stendhal cult is growing, thanks to Arthur Schurig, L. Spach, and Friedrick von Oppeln-Bronikowski.

It has been mistaken criticism to range Beyle as only a "literary" man. He despised the profession of literature, remarking that he wrote as one smokes a cigar. His diaries and letters, the testimony of his biographer, Colomb, and his friend Mérimée, betray this pose—a greater poser and *mystificateur* it would be difficult to find. He labored like a slave over his material, and if he affected to take the Civil Code as his model of style it nettled him, nevertheless, when any one decried his prose. His friend Jacquemont spoke of his detestable style of a grocer; Balzac called him to account for his carelessness. Flattered, astounded, as was Stendhal by the panegyric of Balzac, his letter of thanks shows that the reproof cut deeply. He abused Chateaubriand, Madame de Staël, and George Sand for their highly colored imagery and flowing manner. He even jeered at Balzac, saying that if he—Beyle—had written "It snows in my heart," or some such romantic figure, Balzac would then have praised his style.

Thanks to the labors of Casimir Stryienski and his colleagues, we may study the different drafts Stendhal made of his novels. He seldom improved by recasting. The truth is that his dry, naked method of narration, despite its clumsiness, despite the absence of plan, is excellently adapted to the expression of his ideas. He is a psychologue. He deals with soul-stuff. An eighteenth-century man in his

general ideas and feelings, he followed the seventeenth century and Montesquieu; he derives from Montaigne and Chamfort, and his philosophy is colored by a study of Condillac, Hobbes, Helvétius, Cabanis, Destutt Tracy, and Machiavelli. He is a descendant of Diderot and the Encyclopædists, a *philosophe* of the *salons,* a *petit maître,* a materialist for whom nothing exists but his ideas and sensations. A French epicurean, his pendulum swings between love and war—the adoration of energy and the adoration of pleasure. What complicates his problem is the mixture of warrior and psychologist. That the man who followed Napoleon through several of his campaigns, serving successfully as a practical commissary and fighter, should have been an adorer of women, was less strange than that he should have proved to be the possessor of such vibrating sensibility. Jules Lemaitre sees him as "a grand man of action paralysed little by little because of his incomparable analysis." Yet he never betrayed unreadiness when confronted by peril. He read Voltaire and Plato during the burning of Moscow—which he described as a beautiful spectacle—and he never failed to present himself before his kinsman and patron, Marshal Daru, with a clean-shaved face, even when the Grand Army was a mass of stragglers.

"You are a man of heart," said Daru, Frenchman in that phrase. When Napoleon demanded five millions of francs from a German province, Stendhal—who adopted this pen-name from the archæologist Winckelmann's birthplace, a Prussian town—raised seven millions and was in consequence execrated by the people. Napoleon asked on receiving the money the name of the agent, adding, *"c'est bien!"* We are constrained to believe Mérimée's assertion that Stendhal was the soul of honor, and incapable of baseness, after this proof. At a time when plunder was the order of the day's doings, the poor young aide-de-camp could have pocketed with ease at least a million of the excess

tax. He did not do this, nor did he, in his letters or memoirs, betray any remorse for his honesty.

Sainte-Beuve said that Beyle was the dupe of his fear of being duped. This was confirmed by Mérimée in the concise little study prefixed to the Correspondence. It is doubtful if these two men were drawn to each other save by a certain contemptuous way of viewing mankind. Stendhal was the more sentimental of the pair; he frequently reproached Mérimée for his cold heart. He had also a greater sense of humor. That each distrusted the other is not to be denied. Augustin Filon, in his *brochure* on Mérimée, said that "the influence exercised by Stendhal on Mérimée during the decisive years in which his literary eclecticism was formed, was considerable, even more than Mérimée himself was aware." But the author of Carmen was a much finer artist. The Danish critic, Georg Brandes, has described Beyle's relation to Balzac as "that of the reflective to the observant mind; of the thinker in art to the seer. We see into the hearts of Balzac's characters, into the 'dark-red mill of passion' which is the motive force of their action; Beyle's characters receive their impulse from the head, the 'open light-and-sound chamber'; the reason being that Beyle was a logician, and Balzac a man of an effusively rich animal nature. Beyle stands to Victor Hugo in much the same position as Leonardo da Vinci to Michel Angelo. Hugo's plastic imagination creates a supernaturally colossal and muscular humanity fixed in an eternal attitude of struggle and suffering; Beyle's mysterious, complicated, refined intellect produces a small series of male and female portraits, which exercise an almost magic fascination on us with their far-away, enigmatic expressions, and their sweet, wicked smile. Beyle is the metaphysician among the French authors of his day, as Leonardo was the metaphysician among the great painters of the Renaissance."

According to Bourget, Beyle's advent into letters marked the "tragic dawn of pessimism." But is it precise to call him a pessimist? He was of too vigorous a temper, too healthy in body, to be classed with the decadents. His was the soul of a sixteenth-century Italian, one who had read and practised the cheerful scepticism of Montaigne. As he served bravely when a soldier, so, stout and subtle in after life, he waged war with the blue devils—his chief foe. Disease weakened his physique, weakened his mentality, yet he fought life to its dull end. He was pursued by the secret police, and this led him to all sorts of comical disguises and pseudonyms. And to the last he experienced a childish delight in the invention of odd names for himself.

Felix Fénéon, in speaking of Arthur Rimbaud, asserted that his work was, perhaps, "outside of literature." This, with some modification, may be said of Beyle. His stories are always interesting; they may ramble and halt, digress and wander into strange places; but the psychologic vision of the writer never weakens. His chief concern is the mind or soul of his characters. He hitches his kite to earth, yet there is the paper airship floating above you, lending a touch of the ideal to his most matter-of-fact tales. He uses both the microscope and scalpel. He writes, as has been said too often, indifferently; his formal sense is nearly *nil;* much of his art criticism mere gossip; he has little feeling for color; yet he describes a soul and its manifold movements in precise terms, and while he is at furthest remove from symbolism, he often has an irritating spiritual suggestiveness. The analogue here to plastic art—he, the least plastic of writers—is unescapable. Stendhal, whatever else he may be, is an incomparable etcher of character. His acid phrases "bite" his arbitrary lines deeply; the sharp contrasts of black and white enable him to portray, without the fiery-hued rhetoric of either Chateubriand or Hugo, the finest split shades of thought and emotion. Never color, only

nuance—and the slash and sweep of a drastic imagination.

He was an inveterate illusionist in all that concerned himself; even with himself he was not always sincere—and he usually wrote of himself. His many books are a masquerade behind which one discerns the posture of the mocker, the sensibility of a reversed idealist, and the spirit of a bitter analyst. This sensibility must not be confounded with the *sensibilité* of a Maurice de Guérin. Rather it is the morbid sensitiveness of a Swift combined with an unusual receptivity to sentimental and artistic impressions. Professor Walter Raleigh thus describes the sensibility of those times: "The sensibility that came into vogue during the eighteenth century was of a finer grain than its modern counterpart. It studied delicacy, and sought a cultivated enjoyment in evanescent shades of feeling, and the fantasies of unsubstantial grief." Vanity ruled in Stendhal. Who shall say how much his unyielding spirit suffered because of his poverty, his enormous ambitions? His motto might have been: Blessed are the proud of spirit, for they shall inherit the Kingdom of Earth. He wrote in 1819: "I have had three passions in my life. Ambition—1800–1811; love for a woman who deceived me, 1811–1818; and in 1818 a new passion." But then he was ever on the verge of a new passion, ever deceived—at least he believed himself to be—and he, the fearless theoretician of passion, often was, he has admitted, in practice the timid amateur. He planned the attack upon a woman's heart as a general plans the taking of an enemy's citadel. He wrote L'Amour for himself. He defined the rules of the game, but shivered when he saw the battle-field. Magnificent he was in precept, though not always in action. He was for this reason never *blasé*, despite continual grumblings over his *ennui*. In his later years at Cività Vecchia he yearned for companionship like a girl, and, a despiser of Paris and the Parisians, he suffered from the nostalgia of the boulevard. He adored Milan and the

Milanese, yet Italy finally proved too much for his nerves; *J'ai tant vu le soleil*, he confessed. Contradictory and fantastic, he hated all authority. Mérimée puts down to the account of the sour old *abbé* Raillane, who taught him, the distaste he entertained for the Church of Rome. Yet he enjoyed its æsthetic side. He was its admirer his life long, notwithstanding his gibes and irreligious jests, just as he was a Frenchman by reason of his capacity for reaction under depressing circumstances. But how account for his monstrous hatred of his father? The elder Beyle was penurious and as hard as flint. He nearly starved his son, for whom he had no affection. Henry could not see him salute his mother without loathing him. She read Dante in the original, and her son assured himself that there was Italian blood on her side of the house. The youth's hatred, too, of his aunt Séraphie almost became a mania. It has possibly enriched fiction by the portrait of Gina of the resilient temperament, the delicious Duchess of Sanseverina. All that she is, his aunt Séraphie was not, and with characteristic perversity he makes her enamored of her nephew Fabrice del Dongo. Did he not say that parents are our first enemies when we enter the world?

His criticisms of music and painting are chiefly interesting for what they tell us of his temperament. He called himself "observer of the human heart," and was taken by a cautious listener for a police spy. He seldom signed the same name twice to his letters. He delighted to boast of various avocations; little wonder the Milanese police drove him out of the city. He said that to be a good philosopher one must be *sec*, and without illusions. Perspicacious, romantic, delicate in his attitude toward women, he could be rough, violent, and suspicious. He scandalized George Sand, delighted Alfred de Musset; Madame Lamartine refused to receive him in her drawing-room at Rome. His intercourse with Byron was pleasant. He disliked Walter

Scott and called him a hypocrite—possibly because there is no freedom in his love descriptions. Lord Byron in a long letter expostulated with Stendhal, defending his good friend, Scott; but Stendhal never quite believed in the poet's sincerity—indeed, suspecting himself, he suspected other men's motives. He had stage-fright when he first met Byron—whom he worshipped. A tremulous soul his, in a rude envelope. At Venice he might have made the acquaintance of young Arthur Schopenhauer and Leopardi, but he was too much interested in the place to care for new faces.

He said that without passion there is neither virtue nor vice. (Taine made a variation on this theme.) A dagger-thrust is a dignified gesture when prompted by passion. After the Napoleonic disaster, Stendhal had lost all his hopes of preferment; he kept his temper admirably, though occasionally calling his old chief bad names. It was a period of the flat, stale, platitudinous, and bourgeois. "In the nineteenth century one must be either a monster or a sheep," wrote Beyle to Byron. A patriot is either a dolt or a rogue! My country is where there are most people like me—Cosmopolis! The only excuse for God is that he does not exist! Verse was invented to aid the memory! A volume of maxims, witty and immoral, might be gathered from the writings of Stendhal that would equal Rivarol and Rochefoucauld. "I require three or four cubic feet of new ideas per day, as a steamboat requires coal," he told Romain Colomb. What energy, what lassitude this man possessed! He spoke English—though he wrote it imperfectly—and Italian; the latter excellently because of his long residence in Italy.

Nietzsche, in Beyond Good and Evil, decribed Stendhal as "that remarkable man who, with a Napoleonic *tempo*, traversed *his* Europe, in fact several centuries of the European soul, as a surveyor and discoverer thereof. It has required two generations to overtake him one way or other; to divine long afterward some of the riddles that perplexed

and enraptured him—this strange Epicurean and man of interrogation, the last great psychologist of France." He also spoke of him as "Stendhal, who has, perhaps, had the most profound eyes and ears of any Frenchman of this century."

Stendhal said that Shakespeare knew the human heart better than Racine; yet despite his English preferences, Stendhal is a psychologist of the *Racinien* school. When an English company of players went to Paris in 1822, Stendhal defended them by pen and in person. He was chagrined that his fellow-countrymen should hiss Othello or The School for Scandal. He despised *chauvinisme,* he the ideal globe-trotter. And he was contradictory enough to have understood Tennyson's "That man's the best cosmopolite who loves his native country best." He scornfully remarked that in 1819 Parisian literary logic could be summoned up thus: "This man does not agree with me, therefore he is a fool; he criticises my book, he is my enemy; therefore a thief, an assassin, a brigand, and forger." Narrow-mindedness must never be imputed to Stendhal. Nor was he a modest man—modesty that virtue of the mediocre.

How much Tolstoy thought of the Frenchman may be found in his declaration that all he knew about war he learned first from Stendhal. "I will speak of him only as the author of the Chartreuse de Parme and Le Rouge et le Noir. These are two great, inimitable works of art. I am indebted for much to Stendhal. He taught me to understand war. Read once more in the Chartreuse de Parme his account of the battle of Waterloo. Who before him had so described war—that is, as it is in reality?" In 1854 they said Balzac and Hugo; in 1886, Balzac and Stendhal. Some day it may be Stendhal and Tolstoy. The Russian with his slow, patient amassing of little facts but follows Stendhal's chaplet of anecdotes. The latter said that the novel should be a mirror that moves along the highway; a novel, he

writes elsewhere, is like a bow—the violin which gives out the sound is the soul of the reader. And Goncourt assimilated this method with surprising results. Stendhal first etched the soul of the new Superman, the exalted young man and woman—Julien Sorel and Matilde de la Môle. They are both immoralists. Exceptional souls, in real life they might have seen the inside of a prison. Stendhal is the original of the one; the other is the source of latter-day feminine souls in revolt, the souls of Ibsen and Strindberg. Laclos's Les Liaisons Dangereuses and Marivaux he has remoulded—Valmont is a prototype of Julien Sorel.

J. J. Weiss has said that profound immorality is probably an attribute common to all great observers of human nature. It would require a devil's advocate of unusual acuity to prove Stendhal a moral man or writer. His philosophy is materialistic. He wrote for the "happy few" and longed for a hundred readers, and wished his readers to be those amiable, unhappy souls who are neither moral nor hypocritical. His egoism brought him no surcease from boredom. His diaries and letters and memoirs, so rich in general ideas, are valuable for the student of human nature. The publication of his correspondence was a revelation—a very sincere, human Stendhal came into view. His cosmopolitanism is unaffected; his chapters are mosaics of facts and sensations; his manner of narrative is, as Bourget says, a method of discovery as well as of exposition. His heroes and heroines delve into their motives, note their ideas and sensations. With a few exceptions, modern romancers, novelists, psychologists of fiction seem shallow after Stendhal. Taine confesses to reading Le Rouge et le Noir between thirty and forty times. Stendhal disliked America; to him all things democratic were abhorrent. He loathed the mass, upheld the class; an individualist and aristocrat like Ibsen, he would not recognize the doctrine of equality. The French Revolution was useful only because it evolved

a strong man—Napoleon. America, being democratic, would therefore never produce art, tragedy, music, or romantic love.

It is the fate of some men to exist only as a source of inspiration for their fellow-artists. Shelley is the poet's poet, Meredith the novelist's novelist, and Stendhal a storehouse for psychologues. His virile spirit, in these times of vapid socialistic theories, is a sparkling and sinister pool wherein all may dip and be refreshed—perhaps poisoned. He is not orthodox as thinker or artist; but it is a truism that the wicked of a century ago may be the saints of to-morrow. To read him is to increase one's wisdom; he is dangerous only to fools. Like Schopenhauer and Ibsen, he did not flatter his public; now he has his own public. And nothing would have amused this charming and cynical man more than the knowledge of his canonisation in the church of world literature. He gaily predicted that he would be understood about 1880–1900; but his impertinent shadow projects far into the twentieth century. Will he be read in 1935? he has asked. Why not? A monument is to be erected to him in Paris. Rodin has designed the medallion portrait.

II

The labors, during the past twenty years, of Casimir Stryienski, François de Nion, L. Bélugon, Arthur Chuquet, Henry Cordier, Pierre Brun, Ricciotto Canudo, Octave Uzanne, Hugues Rebell—to quote the names of a few devoted Stendhalians—have enabled us to decipher Stendhal's troubled life. M. Stryienski unearthed at Grenoble a mass of manuscript, journals, tales, half-finished novels, and they have been published. Was there any reason to doubt the existence of a Stendhal Club after the appearance of those two interesting books, Soirées du Stendhal Club, by Stryienski? The compact little study in the series, Les Grands

Ecrivains Français, by Edouard Rod, and Colomb's biographical notice at the head of Armance, and Stryienski's Etude Biographique are the principal references for Stendhal students. And this, too, despite the evident lack of sympathy in the case of M. Rod. It is a minute, painstaking *étude,* containing much fair criticism; fervent Stendhalians need to be reminded of their master's defects and of the danger of self-dupery. If Stendhal were alive, he would be the first to mock at his disciples' enthusiasm—the enthusiasm of the *parvenu,* as he puts it. (He ill concealed his own in the presence of pictorial masterpieces or the ballets of Viganò.) Rod, after admitting the wide influence of Stendhal upon the generations that followed him, patronizingly concludes by a quotation: "Les petits livres ont leurs destinées." What, then, does he call great, if Le Rouge et le Noir and La Chartreuse de Parme are "little books"?

Marie-Henry Beyle was born at Grenoble, Dauphiny, January 23, 1783. He died at Paris, March 23, 1842, stricken on the Rue Neuve des Capucines by apoplexy. Colomb had his dying friend carried to his lodgings. He was buried in Montmartre Cemetery, followed there by Mérimée, Colomb, and one other. Upon his monument is an epitaph composed a short time before he died. It is in Italian and reads: Arrigo Beyle, Milanese. *Scrisse, Amò, Visse.* Ann. 59. M.2. Mori 2. 23 Marzo. MDCCCXLII. (Harry Beyle, Milanese. Wrote, Loved, Lived. 59 years and 2 months. He died at 2 A.M. on the 23rd of March, 1842.) This bit of mystification was quite in line with Beyle's career. As he was baptized the English Henry, he preferred to be known in death as the Milanese Harry. Pierre Brun says that there was a transposition in the order of *Scrisse, Amò, Visse;* it should read the reverse. The sculptor David d'Angers made a medallion of the writer in 1825. It is reproduced in the Rod monograph, and his son

designed another for the tomb. This singular epitaph of a singular man did not escape the eyes of his enemies. Charles Monselet called him a renegade to his family and country; which is uncritical tomfoolery. Stendhal was a citizen of the world—and to the last a Frenchman. And not one of his cavilling contemporaries risked his life with such unconcern as did this same Beyle in the Napoleonic campaigns. Mérimée has drawn for us the best portrait of Stendhal, Colomb, his earliest companion, wrote the most gossipy life. Stryienski, however, has demonstrated that Colomb attenuated, even erased many expressions of Stendhal's, and that he also attempted to portray his hero in fairer colors. But deep-eyed Stendhalians will not have their master transformed into a tame cat of the Parisian salons. His wickedness is his chief attraction, they think. An oft-quoted saying of Stendhal's has been, Stryienski shows, tampered with: "A party of eight or ten agreeable persons," said Stendhal, "where the conversation is gay and anecdotic, and where weak punch is handed around at half past twelve, is the place where I enjoy myself the most. There, in my element, I infinitely prefer hearing others talk to talking myself. I readily sink back into the silence of happiness; and if I talk, it is only to pay my ticket of admission." What Stendhal wrote was this: "Un salon de huit ou dix personnes dont toutes les femmes ont eu les amants," etc. The touch is unmistakable.

Henry was educated at the Ecole Centrale of Grenoble. When he was ten years of age, Louis XVI was executed, and the precocious boy, to annoy his father, displayed undisguised glee at the news. He served the mass, an altar-boy at the Convent of the Propagation, and revealed unpleasant traits of character. His father he called by a shocking name, but the death of his mother, when he was seven, he never forgot. He loved her in true Stendhalian style. His maiden aunt Séraphie ruled the house of the elder Beyle, and Henry's two sisters, Pauline—the favorite

of her brother—and Zenaïde, most tyrannically. His young existence was a cruel battle with his elders, excepting his worthy grandfather, Doctor Gagnon, an *esprit fort* of the approved eighteenth-century variety. On his bookshelves Henry found Voltaire, Rousseau, d'Holbach, and eagerly absorbed them. A great-aunt taught him that the pride of the Spaniard was the best quality of a man. When he heard of his aunt's death, he threw himself on his knees and passionately thanked the God in whom he had never believed. His father, Chérubin-Joseph Beyle, was chevalier of the Legion of Honor and his family of old though not noble stock. Its sympathies were aristocratic, royalist, while Henry—certainly not a radical in politics—loved to annoy his father by his Jacobin opinions. He in turn was ridiculed by the Dauphinois when he called himself *de* Stendhal. Not a lovable boy, certainly, and, it is said, scarcely a moral one. At school they nick-named him "la Tour ambulate," because of his thick-set figure. He preferred mathematics to all other studies, as he contemplated entering l'École Polytechnique. November 10, 1799, found him in Paris with letters for his cousins Daru. They proved friendly. He was afterward, through the influence of Pierre Daru, minister of war, made lieutenant of cavalry, commissary and auditor of the Council of State. He served in the Italian campaign, following Napoleon through the Saint Bernard pass two days later. Aide-de-camp of General Michaud, he displayed *sang-froid* under fire. He was present at Jena and Wagram, and asked, during a day of fierce fighting, "Is that all?" War and love only provoked from this nonchalant person the same question. He was always disappointed by reality; and, as Rod adds, "Is that all?" might be the *leit motiv* of his life. Forced by sickness to retire to Vienna, he was at the top-notch of his life in Paris and Milan, 1810–1812. He left a brilliant position to rejoin the Emperor in Russia. In 1830 he was nominated consul at Trieste; but Metternich objected be-

cause of Stendhal's reputation as a political intrigant in Milan, ten years earlier—a reputation he never deserved. He was sent to Cività Vecchia, where he led a dull existence, punctuated by trips to Rome, and, at long intervals, to Paris. From 1814 to 1820 he lived in Milan, and in love, a friend of Manzoni, Silvio Pellico, Monti. The police drove him back to Paris, and he says it was the deadliest blow to his happiness. For a decade he remained here, leading the life of a man around town, a sublimated gossip, dilettante, surface idler; withal, a hard worker. A sybarite on an inadequate income, he was ever the man of action. Embroiled in feminine intrigues, sanguine, clairvoyant, and a sentimentalist, he seldom contemplated marriage. Once, at Cività Vecchia, a young woman of bourgeois extraction tempted him by her large *dot;* but inquiries made at Grenoble killed his chances. Indeed, he was not the stuff from which the ideal husband is moulded. He did not entertain a high opinion of matrimony. He said that the Germans had a mania for marriage, an institution which is servitude for men. On a trip down the Rhone, in 1833, he met George Sand and Alfred de Musset going to Italy—to that Venice which was the poets' Waterloo and Pagello's victory. Stendhal behaved so madly, so boisterously, and uttered such paradoxes that he offended Madame Dudevant-Sand, who openly expressed her distaste for him, though admiring his brilliancy. De Musset had a pretty talent for sketching and drew Stendhal dancing at the inn before a servant. It is full of verve. He also wrote some verse about the French consul at Cività Vecchia:

"Où Stendhal, cet esprit charmant,
Remplissait si dévotement
Sa sinécure."

Sinecure it was, though *ennui* ruled; but he had his memories, and Rome was not far away. In 1832, while at San

Pietro in Montorio, he bethought himself of his age. Fifty years would soon arrive. He determined to write his memoirs. And we have the Vie de Henri Brulard, Souvenirs d'Egotisme, and the Journal (1801–1814). In their numerous pages—for he was an indefatigable graphomaniac—may be found the thousand and one experiences in love, war, diplomacy that made up his life. His boasted impassibility, like Flaubert's, does not survive the test of these letters and intimate confessions. Mérimée, too, wrote to Jenny Dacquin without his accustomed mask. Stendhal is the most personal of writers; each novel is Henry Beyle in various situations, making various and familiar gestures.

His presence was welcome in a dozen salons of Paris. He preferred, however, a box at la Scala, listening to Rossini or watching a Viganò ballet, near his beloved Angela. But after seven years Milan was closed to him, and as he was known in a restricted circle at Paris as a writer of power, originality, and as an authority on music and painting, he returned there in 1821. He frequented the salon of Destutt de Tracy, whose ideology and philosophic writings he admired. There he saw General Lafayette and wrote maliciously of this hero, who, though seventy-five, was in love with a Portuguese girl of nineteen. The same desire to startle that animated Baudelaire kept Beyle in hot water. He was a visitor at the home of Madame Cabanis, of M. Cuvier, of Madame Ancelot, Baron Gérard, and Castellane, and on Sundays, at the salon of Etienne Délacluze, the art critic of the *Débats,* and a daily visitor at Madame Pasta's. He disliked, in his emphatic style, Victor Cousin, Thiers, and his host Délacluze. For Beyle to dislike a man was to announce the fact to the four winds of heaven, and he usually did so with a brace of bon-mots that set all Paris laughing. Naturally, his enemies retaliated. Some disagreeable things were said of him, though none quite so sharp as the remark made by a certain Madame Céline:

"Ah! I see M. Beyle is wearing a new coat. Madame Pasta must have had a benefit." This witticism was believed, because of the long friendship between the Italian *cantatrice* and the young Frenchman. He occupied a small apartment in the same building, though it is said the attachment was platonic.

In 1800 he met, at Milan, Signora Angela Pietragrua. He loved her. Eleven years later, when he returned to Italy, this love was revived. He burst into tears when he saw her again. *Quello è il chinese!* explained the massive Angela to her father. Even that lovetap did not disconcert the furnace-like affection of Henry. This Angela made him miserable by her coquetries. The feminine characters in his novels and tales are drawn from life. His essay on Love is a *centaine* of experiences crystallized into maxims and epigrams. This man of too expansive heart, who confessed to trepidation in the presence of a woman he loved, displayed surprising delicacy. Where he could not respect, he could not love. His sensibility was easily hurt; he abhorred the absence of taste. Love was for him a mixture of moonshine, *esprit,* and physical beauty. A very human man, Henry Beyle, though he never viewed woman exactly from the same angle as did Dante; or, perhaps, his many Beatrices proved geese.

Stryienski relates that, on their return from Italy in 1860, Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie visited Grenoble and, in the municipal library, saw a portrait of Stendhal. "But that is M. Beyle, is it not?" cried the Empress. "How comes his portrait here?" "He was born at Grenoble," responded Gariel, the librarian. She remembered him, this amusing mature friend of her girlhood. The daughters of Madame de Montijo, Eugénie and Paca, met Beyle through Mérimée, who was intimate with their mother. The two girls liked him; he spun for them his best yarns, he initiated them into new games; in a word, he was

a welcome guest in the household, and there are two letters in the possession of Auguste Cordier, one addressed to Beyle by E. Guzman y Palafox dated December, 1839, when the future Empress of the French was thirteen; the other from her sister Paca, both affectionate and of a charm. The episode was a pleasant one in the life of Beyle.

Mérimée also arranged a meeting between Victor Hugo and Beyle in 1829 or 1830. Sainte-Beuve was present, and in a letter to Albert Collignon, published in *Vie littéraire,* 1874, he writes of the pair as two savage cats, their hair bristling, both on the defensive. Hugo knew that Beyle was an enemy of poetry, of the lyric, of the "ideal." The ice was not broken during the evening. Beyle had an antipathy for Hugo, Hugo thoroughly disliked Beyle. And if we had the choice to-day between talking with Hugo or Beyle, is there any doubt as to the selection?—Beyle the *raconteur* of his day. He was too clear-sighted to harbor any illusions concerning literary folk. Praise from one's colleagues is a brevet of resemblance, he has written. Doesn't this sound like old Dr. Johnson's "The reciprocal civility of authors is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of life"?

III

Prosper Mérimée, has told us that his friend and master, Henry Stendhal-Beyle, was wedded to the old-fashioned theory: a man should not be in a woman's company longer than five minutes without making love; granting, of course, that the woman is pretty and pleasing. This idea Stendhal had imbibed when a soldier in the Napoleonic campaign. It was hussar tactics of the First Empire. "Attack, attack, attack," he cries. His book De l'Amour practically sets forth the theory; but like most theoreticians, Stendhal was timid in action. He was a sentimentalist—he the pretended cynic and *blasé* man of the world. Mérimée acknowledges

that much of his own and Stendhal's impassibility was pure posing. Nevertheless, with the exceptions of Goethe and Byron, no writer of eminence in the last century enjoyed such a sentimental education as Stendhal. At Weimar the passionate pilgrim may see a small plaque which contains portraits of the women beloved by Goethe—omitting Frederike Brion. True to the compass of Teutonic sentimentality, Goethe's mother heads the list. Then follow the names of Cornelia, Kätchen Schönkopf, Lotte Buff, Lili Schönemann, Corona Schröter, Frau von Stein, Christiane Vulpius—later Frau von Goethe—Bettina von Arnim, Minna Herzlieb, and Marianne v. Willemer; with their respective birth and death dates. Several other names might have been added, notably that of the Polish *pianiste* Goethe encountered at Marienbad. The collection is fair-sized, even for a poet who lived as long as Goethe and one who reproached Balzac with digging from a woman's heart each of his novels. To both Goethe and Stendhal the epigram of George Meredith might be applied: "Men may have rounded Seraglio Point. They have not yet doubled Cape Turk."

The wonder is that thus far no devoted Stendhalian has prepared a similar *carton* with the names and pictures of their master's—dare we say?—victims. Stendhal loved many women, and like Goethe his first love was his mother. For him she was the most precious image of all, and he was jealous of his father. This was at the age of seven; but the precocity of the boy and his exaggerated sensibility must be remembered—which later brought him so much unhappiness and so little joy. A casual examination of the list of his loves, reciprocated or spurned, would make a companion to that of Weimar. Their names are Mélanie Guilbert-Louason, Angela Pietragrua, Mlle. Beretter, the Countess Palffy, Menta, Elisa, Livia B., Madame Azur, Mina de Grisheim, Mme. Jules, and *la petite P.* The num-

ber he loved without consolation was still larger. Despite his hussar manœuvres, Stendhal was easily rebuffed. It is odd that Goethe's and Stendhal's fair ones, upon whom they poured poems and novels, did not die—that is, immediately—on being deserted. Goethe relieved the pain of many partings by writing a poem or a play and seeking fresh faces. Stendhal did the same—substituting a novel or a study or innumerable letters for poems and plays. He believed that one nail drove out another; which is very soothing to masculine vanity. But did any woman break her heart because of his fickleness? Frau von Stein of all the women loved by Goethe probably took his defection seriously. She didn't kill herself, however. He wounded many a heart, yet the majority of his loves married, and apparently happily. Stendhal, ugly as he was, slew his hundreds; they recovered after he had passed on to fresh conquests; a fact that he, with his accustomed sincerity, did not fail to note. Yet this same gallant was among the few in the early years of the nineteenth century to declare for the enfranchisement, physical and spiritual, of woman. He was a *féministe*. But, in reality, his theory of love resembled that of the writer who said that "it was simple and brief, like a pressure of the hand between sympathetic persons, or a gay luncheon between two friends of which a pleasant memory remains, if not also a gentle gratitude toward the companion." I quote from memory.

It was at Rome that he first resolved to tell the story of his life. In the dust he traced the initials of the beloved ones. In his book he omitted no details. His motto was: *la vérité toute nue*. If he has not spared himself, he has not spared others. What can the critics, who recently blamed George Moore for his plain speech in his memoirs, say to Stendhal's journals and La Vie de Henri Brulard? Many of the names were at first given with initials or asterisks; Mérimée burned the letters Stendhal sent him, and regretted

the act. But the Stendhalians, the young enthusiasts of the Stendhal Club, have supplied the missing names—those of men and women who have been dead half a century and more.

De l'Amour, Stendhal's remarkable study of the love-passion, is marred by the attempt to imprison a sentiment behind the bars of a mathematical formula. He had inherited from his study of Condillac, Helvétius, Tracy, Chamfort the desire for a rigid schematology, for geometrical demonstration. The word "logic" was always on the tip of his tongue, and he probably would have come to blows with Professor Jowett for his dictum, uttered at the close of a lecture: "Logic is neither an art nor a science, but a dodge." Love for Stendhal was without a Beyond. It was a matter of the senses entirely. The soul counted for little, manners for much. A sentimental epicurean, he is the artistic descendant of Benjamin Constant's Adolphe, both by tradition and temperament. Stendhal fell into the mistake of the metaphysician in setting up numerous categorical traps to snare his subject. They are artificial, and yet bear a resemblance to certain Schopenhauerian theories. Both men practised what they did not preach. "Beauty is a promise of happiness," wrote Stendhal, and it was so effective that Baudelaire rewrote it with a slight variation. The "crystallization" formula of Stendhal occurred to him while down in a salt mine near Salzburg. He saw an elm twig covered with sparkling salt cystals, and he used it as an image to express the love that discerns in the beloved one all perfections. There are several crystallizations during the course of "true love." His book is more autobiographical than scientific; that the writer gleaned the facts from his own heart-experiences adds to the value and veracity of the work. As a catechism for lovers, it is unique; and it was so well received that from 1822 to 1833 there were exactly seventeen copies sold. But it has been plundered by other

writers without ackonwledgment. Stendhal and Schopenhauer could have shaken hands on the score of their unpopularity—and about 1880 on their sudden recrudescence.

With all his display of worldly wisdom Stendhal really loved but three times in his life; this statement may shock some of his disciples who see in him a second Casanova, but a study of his life will prove it. He had gone to Paris with the established conviction that he must become a Don Juan. That was—comical or shocking as it may sound—his projected profession. Experience soon showed him other aspects. He was too refined, too tender-hearted, to indulge in the conventional dissipations of adolescent mankind. The lunar ray of sentiment was in his brain; if he couldn't idealize a woman, he would leave her. It was his misfortune, the lady's fortune—whoever she might have been—and the world's good luck that he never was married. As a husband he would have been a glorious failure. Mélanie Guilbert-Louason was an actress in Paris, who, after keeping him on tenter-hooks of jealousy, accepted his addresses. He couldn't marry her, because the allowance made by his father did not suffice for himself; besides, she had a daughter by a former marriage. He confesses that lack of money was the chief reason for his timidity with women; a millionaire, he might have been a conquering and detestable hero. Like Frédéric Moreau in L'Education Sentimentale, Stendhal always feared interruption from a stronger suitor, and his fears were usually verified. But he went with Guilbert to Marseilles, where she was acting, and to support himself took a position in a commercial house. That for him meant a grand passion; he loathed business. She married a Russian, Baskow by name. Stendhal was inconsolable for weeks. How he would have applauded the ironical cry of Jules Laforgue's Hamlet: "Stability! stability! thy name is Woman." Although he passed his days embroidering upon the canvas of the Eternal Masculine portraits of

the secular sex, Stendhal first said, denying a certain French king, that women never vary.

He fell into abysmal depths of love with Angela Pietragrua at Milan. He was a dashing soldier, and if Angela deceived him he was youthful enough to stand the shock. Eleven years later he revisited Milan and wept when he saw Angela again. He often wept copiously, a relic possibly of eighteenth-century sensibilities. Angela did not weep. She, however, was sufficiently touched to start a fresh affair with her faithful Frenchman. He did not always enjoy smooth sailing. There were a dozen women that either scorned him or else remained unconscious of his sentiments. One memory remained with him to the last—recall his cry of loneliness to Romain Colomb when languishing as a French consul at Cività Vecchia: "I am perishing for want of love!" He thought doubtless of Métilde, wife of General Dembowsky, who from 1818 to 1824 (let us not concern ourselves if these dates coincide with or overlap other love-affairs; Stendhal was very versatile) neither encouraged nor discouraged at Milan the ardent exile. So infatuated was he that he neglected his chances with the actress Viganò, and also with the Countess Kassera. Madame Dembowsky, who afterward did not prove so cruel to the conspirator Ugo Foscolo, allowed Stendhal the inestimable privilege of kissing her hand. He sighed like a schoolboy and trailed after the heartless one from Milan to Florence, from Florence to Rome. The gossip that he was the lover in Paris of the singer Pasta caused the Dembowsky to deny him hope. He was sincerely attached to her. Had she said "Kill yourself," he would have done so. Yes, such a romantic he was. She was born Viscontini and separated from a brutal soldier of a husband. Her cousin, Madame Traversi, was an obstacle in this unhappy passion of Stendhal's. She hated him. Métilde died at the age of thirty-eight, in 1825. Because of her he had replied to

Mlle. Viganò—when she asked him: "Beyle, they say that you are in love with me!" "They are fooling you." For this he was never forgiven. It is a characteristic note of Stendhalian frankness—Stendhal, who never deceived any one but himself. Here is a brace of his amiable sayings on the subject of Woman:—

"La fidélité des femmes dans le mariage, lorsqu' il n'y a pas d'amour, est probablement une chose contre nature."

"La seule chose que je voisà blâmer dans la pudeur, c'est de conduire à l'habitude de mentir."

IV

A promenader of souls and cities, Stendhal was a letter-writer of formidable patience; his published correspondence is enormous. How enormous may be seen in the three volumes published at Paris by Charles Bosse, the pages of which number 1,386. These letters begin in 1800, when Stendhal was a precocious youth of seventeen, and end 1842, a few days before his death. There are more than 700 of them, and he must have written more—probably several thousand; for we know that Mérimée destroyed nearly all his correspondence with Stendhal, and we read of 300 written to a Milanese lady—his one grand, because unsuccessful, passion. But a few of these are included, the remainder doubtless having been burned for preduence' sake. The earliest edition of the Stendhal letters appeared in 1855, edited by Prosper Mérimée, with an introduction by the author of Carmen. The present edition is edited by two devoted Stendhalians, Ad. Paupe and P. A. Cheramy. It comprises all the earlier correspondence, the letters printed in the Souvenirs d'Egotisme (1892), some letters never before published, Lettres Intimes (1892), and letters published in the first series of Soirées du Stendhal Club (1905). There are also letters from the archives of

the Ministers of the Interior, of War, and Foreign Affairs—altogether a complete collection, though ugly in appearance, resembling a volume of Congressional reports, but valuable to the Stendhal student.

For the first time the names of his correspondents appear in full. Mérimée suppressed most of them or gave only the initials. We learn who these correspondents were, and there is a general key for the deciphering of the curious names Stendhal bestowed upon them—he was a wag and a mystifier in this respect. His own signature was seldom twice alike. A list is given and reaches the number of one hundred and seventy-nine pseudonyms. Maurice Barrès has written a gentle preface rather in the air, which he entitled: Stendhal's Sentiment of Honor. One passage is worthy of quotation. Barrès asserts that Stendhal never asked whether a sentiment or an act was useful or fecund, but whether it testified to a thrilling energy. Since the pragmatists are claiming the Frenchman as one of their own, this statement may prove revelatory.

The first volume is devoted to his years of apprenticeship (1800–1806) and his active life (1808–1814). The majority of the letters are addressed to his sister, Pauline Beyle, at Grenoble, a sympathetic soul. With the gravity of a young, green philosopher, he addresses to her homilies by the yard. Sixty instructing twenty! He tells her what to read, principally the eighteenth century philosophers: Rousseau, Voltaire, Helvétius, Tracy, Locke—amusing and highly moral reading for a lass—and he never wearies of praising Shakespeare. "I am a Romantic," he says elsewhere; "that is, I prefer Shakespeare to Racine, Byron to Boileau." This worldly-wise youth must have bored his sister. She understood him, however, and as her life at home with a disagreeable and avaricious father was not happy, her correspondence with brother Henry must have been a consolation. He does not scruple to call his father hard

names, and recommends his sister not to marry for love but for a comfortable home. She actually did both. Edouard Mounier is another correspondent; also Félix Faure, born in Stendhal's city, Grenoble. We learn much of the Napoleonic campaigns in which Stendhal served, particularly of the burning of Moscow and the disastrous retreat of the French army. Related by an eye-witness whose style is concise, whose power of observation is extraordinary, these letters possess historic value.

All Paris and Milan are in the second volume, The Man of the World and the Dilettante (1815–1830); while The Public Functionary and Novelist are the themes of volume three (1830–1842). The friends with whom Stendhal corresponded were Guizot, Thiers, Balzac, Byron, Walter Scott, Sainte-Beuve, and many distinguished noblemen and men of affairs. He had friends in London, Thomas Moore and Sutton-Sharp among the rest; and he visited England several times. Baron Mareste and Romain Colomb were confidants. Stendhal, with an irony that never deserted him, wrote obituary notices of himself because Jules Janin had jestingly remarked that when Stendhal died he would furnish plenty of good material for the necrologists. The articles in guise of letters sent M. Stritch of the *German Review,* London, are tedious reading; besides, there are too many of them.

As a man whose ears and eyes were very close to the whirring of contemporary events, his descriptions of Napoleon and Byron are peculiarly interesting. At first Napoleon had been a demigod, then he was reviled because with the Corsican's downfall he lost his chances for the future. He had witnessed the coronation and did not forget that Talma had given the young Bonaparte free tickets to the Comédie Française; also that Pope Pius VII pronounced Latin Italian fashion, thus: *Spiritous sanctous.* As the Emperor passed by on horseback, cheered by the mobs, "he

smiled his smile of the theatre, in which one shows the teeth, but with eyes that smile not." Stendhal tells us that the Emperor had forehead and nose in an unbroken line, a common trait in certain parts of France, he adds.

He first encountered Byron in the year 1812, at Milan. It was in a box of the Scala. He was overcome by the beauty of the poet, by his graciousness. Here we see Stendhal, no longer a soldier or a cynic, but a man of sensibility, almost a hero-worshipper. Byron was agreeable. They met often. When Byron's physician and secretary, Polidori, was arrested by the Milan secret police, Stendhal relates that the Englishman's rage was appalling. Byron resembled Napoleon, declared Stendhal, in his marble wrath. Another time the French author advised Byron, who lived at a distance from the opera house, to take a carriage, as after midnight walking was dangerous in Milan. Coldly though politely Byron asked for some indication of his route and then, during a painful silence, he left poor Stendhal staring after him as he hobbled away in the darkness. Such human touches are worth more than the letters in which the literature of the day is discussed.

Ten years later, from Genoa (1823), Byron wrote Stendhal, whom he apparently liked, thanking him for a notice he had read of himself in the latter's book, Rome, Naples, et Florence. Supreme master of the anecdote, these letters may serve as an introduction to Stendhal's works, though we wish for more of the tender epistles. However, in The Diary, the Journal and the Life of Henri Brulard, one may find copious and frank confessions of Stendhal's love-life. So little of the literary man was in him that at the close of his career, when he had received the Legion of Honor, he was indignant because this was bestowed upon him not in his capacity of public functionary but as a man of letters. Adolphe Paupe, the editor of this bulky correspondence—and who knows how much more material there may be in

the Grenoble archives!—fittingly closes his brief introduction with a quotation from a writer the antipodes of Stendhal, the parabolic Barbey d'Aurevilly, who, after calling the correspondence "adorable," adds that it possesses the unheard-of charm of Stendhal's other books, a charm which is inexhaustible. Notwithstanding this eloquence, I prefer the old edition compiled by Mérimée. There is such a thing as too much Stendhal, although every scrap of his writing may be sacred to his disciples.

I am glad, therefore, to note in the second series of the Soirées du Stendhal Club, that the principal Stendhalian —or Beyliste, as some name themselves—Casimir Stryienski, shows a disposition to mock at the antics of over-heated Stendhalians. M. Stryienski, who has been called by Paul Bourget "the man of affairs of the Beyliste family," dislikes the idea of a Stendhal cult and wonders how the ironic and humorous Beyle would have treated the worshippers who wish to make of him a mystic god—which is the proper critical attitude. Beyle-Stendhal would have been the first man to overthrow any altar erected to his worship. The second series, collated by Stryienski and Paul Arbelet, is hardly as novel as the first. The most important article is devoted to the question whether Stendhal dedicated to Napoleon his History of Painting (mostly borrowed from Lanzi's book). The 1817 dedication is enigmatic; it might have meant Napoleon, or Louis XVIII, or the Czar Alexander of Russia. M. Arbelet holds to the latter, as Stendhal was so poor that he hoped for a position as preceptor in Russia and thought by the ambiguity of his dedication to catch the favorable eye of the Czar. Napoleon was at Saint Helena and a hateful king was on the throne of France. Let all three be duped, said to himself the merry Stendhal. That is Arbelet's theory. When in 1854 a new edition of the history appeared, it was headed by a touching, almost tearful dedication to the exile at Saint Helena!

Stendhal's executor, Romain Colomb, had found it among the papers of the dead author, and as Napoleon was dead he published it. Evidently Stendhal had written several, and for politic reasons had selected the misleading one of the 1817 edition. Recall Beethoven's magnificent rage when he tore into pieces the dedicatory page of his Eroica Symphony, on hearing that his hero, Napoleon, had crowned himself Emperor. Quite Stendhalian this, Machiavellian, and also time-serving. No doubt he smiled his wicked smile—with tongue in cheek—at the trick, and no doubt his true disciples applaud it. He was the Superman of his day, one who bothered little with moral obligations. His favorite device was a line of verse from an old opera bouffe: *"Vengo adesso di Cosmopoli"*; and what has a true cosmopolitan, a promenader of cities and prober of souls, in common with such a bourgeois virtue as truth-telling? If, as Metchnikoff asserts, a man is no older than his arteries, then a thinker is only as old as his curiosity. Beyle was ever curious, impertinently so—the Paul Pry of psychologists.

V

His cult grows apace, and like all cults will be overdone. First France, then Italy, and now Germany has succumbed to the novels, memoirs, and delightful gossiping books of travel written by the Frenchman from Grenoble. But what a literary and artistic gold-mine his letters, papers, manuscripts of unfinished novels have proved to men like Casimir Stryienski and the rest. Even in 1909 the Stendhal excavators are busy with their pickers and stealers. Literary Paris becomes enthusiastic when a new batch of correspondence is unearthed at Grenoble or elsewhere. Recently a *cahier*—incomplete to be sure, but indubitably Stendhal's—was found and printed. It was a section of the famous journal exhumed in the library of Grenoble by Stryienski

during 1888. Published in the *Mercure de France,* it bore the title of Fin du Tour d'Italie en 1811. It consists of brief, almost breathless notes upon Naples, its music, customs, streets, inhabitants. References to Ancona, to the author's second sojourn in Milan, and to his numerous lady-loves—each one of whom he lashed himself into believing unique—are therein. He placed Mozart and Cimarosa above all other composers, and Shakespeare above Racine. Naturally the man who loved Mozart was bound to adore Raphael and Correggio. Lombard and Florentine masters he rated higher than the Dutch. Indeed, he abhorred Rembrandt and Rubens almost as much as William Blake abhorred them, though not for the same reason. Despite his perverse and whimsical spirit, Stendhal was, in the larger sense, all of a piece. His likes and dislikes in art are so many witnesses to the unity of his character.

Maurice Barrès relates that at the age of twenty he was in Rome, where he met in the Villa Medici its director, M. Hébert, the painter (died 1908), who promptly asked the young Frenchman: "Do you admire Stendhal?" and proceeded to explain that the writer of La Chartreuse de Parme was his cousin, and once consul at Cività Vecchia, although he spent most of his time in Rome. Stendhal's Promenades had offended the Pope, so these visits were really stolen ones. Bored to death in the stuffy little town where he represented the French Government, Stendhal had been reproved more than once for the dilatory performance of his duties. Hébert, after warning Barrès not to study him too deeply, described him as an old gentleman of exceeding but capricious *esprit.* He roamed among the picture galleries, exclaiming joyously before some old Greek marble or knitting his brows in the Sistine Chapel. Raphael was more to his taste than Michael Angelo, as might have been expected from one who went wild over the ballets Viganò. Another anecdote is one that reveals the malicious, almost

simian trickiness of Beyle-Stendhal. An English lady, a traveller bent on taking notes for a book about Paris, was shown around the city by Stendhal. Seriously, and with his usual courtesy, he gave her an enormous amount of misinformation, misnaming public buildings, churches, the Louvre, its pictures, and nicknaming well-known personages. All this with the hope that she would reproduce it in print. Not very *spirituel,* this performance of M. Beyle. He was an admirer of English folk and their literature, and corresponded in a grotesque sort of English with several prominent men and women in London. We find him writing a congratulatory letter to Thomas Moore on his Lalla Rookh, complacently remarking that the ingrained Hebraism of English character and literature made the production of such an exotic poem all the more wonderful. Though he could praise the gew-gaws and tinsel of Moore's mock Orientalism, he openly despised the limpidity of Lamartine's elegiac verse and the rhythmic illuminated thunder of Victor Hugo.

It is not generally known that Stendhal's friend and disciple, Prosper Mérimée, left an anonymous book, of which there are not many examples, though it has been partially reprinted. It is entitled "H. B. [Henry Beyle], par un des quarante, avec un frontispice stupéfiant dessiné et gravé. Eleutheropolis, l'an 1864 du mensonge Nazaréen." Now, there is a "stupefying" drawing, a project for a statue, by Félicien Rops, the etcher. It depicts the new world-city of Eleutheropolis—a Paris raised to the seventh heaven of cosmopolitanism—with Stendhal set in its midst. Rops was evidently contented to take the little pot-bellied caricature of Henri Monnier, which Monnier declared was not exaggerated, and put it on a pedestal. In his familiar and amusing manner the illustrator shows us multitudes from every quarter of the globe travelling by every known method of conveyance. The idea of teeming nationalities is

evoked. All sorts and conditions of men and women are hurrying to pay their homage to Stendhal, who, hat in hand, stomach advancing, legs absurdly curving, umbrella under his arm, and his ironical lips compressed, contemplates with his accustomed imperturbability these ardent idolators. He seems to say: "I predicted that I should be understood about 1880."

But if this cartoon of Rops is amusing, the contents of Mérimée's book are equally so, both amusing and blasphemous. Stendhal and Mérimée got on fairly well together. Mérimée tells what he thought of Stendhal. There are shocking passages and witty. An atheist, more because of political reasons than religious, Stendhal relates a story about the death of God from heart disease. Since that time the cosmical machine, he asserted, has been in the hands of his son, an inexperienced youth who, not being an engineer, reversed the levers; hence the disorder in matters mundane.

To prove how out of tune was Stendhal with his times, we have only to read his definitions of romanticism and classicism in his Racine et Shakespeare. He wrote: "Romanticism is the art of presenting to people literary works which in the actual state of their habitudes and beliefs are capable of giving the greatest possible pleasure; classicism, on the contrary, is the art of presenting literature which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their great-grandfathers." He also proclaimed as a corollary to this that every dead classic had at one time been a live romantic. Yet he was far from sympathizing, both romantic and realist as he was, with the 1830 romantic movement. Nor did he suspect its potential historical significance; or his own possible significance, despite his clairvoyant prediction. He disliked Hugo, ignored Berlioz, and had no opinion at all on the genius of Delacroix. The painters of 1830, that we knew half a century later as the Barbizon school, he never

mentions. We may imagine him abusing the impressionists in his choleric vein. His appreciations of art, while sound—who dare flout Raphael and Correggio?—are narrow. The immense claims made continually by the Stendhalians for their master are balked by evidences of a provincial spirit. Yes; he, the first of the cosmopolitans, the indefatigable globe-trotter, keenest of observers of the human heart, man without a country—he has said, "My country is where there are most people like me"—was often as blindly prejudiced as a dweller in an obscure hamlet. And doesn't this epigram contradict his idea of the proud, lonely man of genius? It may seem to; in reality he was not like a Nietzschean, but a sociable, pleasure-loving man, seldom putting to the test his theories of individualism. He always sought the human quality; the passions of humanity were the prime things of existence for him. A landscape, no matter how lovely, must have a human or a historic interest. The fiercest assassin in the Trastevere district was at least a man of action and not a sheep. "Without passion there is neither virtue nor vice," he preached. Therefore he greatly lauded Benvenuto Cellini. He loathed democracy and a democratic form of government. Brains, not votes, should rule a nation. He sneered at America as being hopelessly utilitarian.

In the preface to his History of Italian Painting he quoted Alfieri: "My only reason for writing was that my gloomy age afforded me no other occupation." From Cività Vecchia he wrote: "It's awful: women here have only one idea, a new Parisian hat. No poetry here or tolerable company—except with prisoners; with whom, as French Consul, I cannot possibly seek friendship." To kill the ennui of his existence he either slipped into Rome for a week or else wrote reams of "copy," most of which he never saw in print. Among certain intellectual circles in Paris he was known and applauded as a man of taste, a dilettante of

the seven arts, though his lack of original invention occasionally got him into scrapes. Stendhal might have echoed Molière's "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve"; but he would not have forgotten to remind the dramatic poet that the very witticism was borrowed from Cyrano.

Stryienski's Soirées du Stendhal Club actually presents for the delectation of the Stendhalians parallel columns from Lanzi and Stendhal—so proud are the true believers of the fold that even such evidences of plagiarism do not disconcert them. The cribbing occurs in the general reflections devoted to the Renaissance. It is as plain as a pikestaff. Notwithstanding, we can read Stendhal with more interest than the original. His lively spirit adorns Lanzi's laborious pages.

Beyle's joke about the "reversed engines of Christianity," quoted by Mérimèe, and his implacable dislike of the Jesuits (as may be seen in his masterpiece, Le Rouge et le Noir—in those days the Yellow Peril was the Jesuits), did not dull his perception of what the papacy had done for art in Italy. He nearly approaches eloquence in his Philosophy of Art (which Taine appreciated and profited by) when writing of the popes of the Renaissance. He does not fail to note the vivifying and reforming influence of the Church at this period upon the brutality and lusts of the nobility and upon poets and painters. Adoring Raphael as much as he did Napoleon and Byron, he declared that Raphael failed in *chiaroscuro* and vaunted the superiority of Correggio in this particular. But he did not deign to mention Rembrandt. Nothing Germanic or Northern pleased him. He was a Latin among Latins, and his passion for Italy and the Italians was not assumed. He had asked of his executor that he be buried in the little Protestant cemetery at Rome. Then he changed his mind and ordered that the cemetery of Andilly, near Montmorency, be his last resting-place. But the fates, that burn into ashes the fairest fruits of man's

ambitions, dropped Stendhal's remains in the cemetery of Montmartre, Paris, where still stands the prosaic tomb with its falsification of the writer's birth. His epitaph he doubtless discovered when fabricating his life of Haydn. In the composer's case it runs: "Veni, scripsi, vixi." And when we consider the fact that his happiest years were in Milan, that there lived the object of his deepest affection, Angela Pietragrua, this inscription was as sincere as the majority of such marble ingenuities in post-mortem politeness.

With all his critical limitations, Stendhal never gave vent to such ineptitudes as Tolstoy regarding Shakespeare. The Russian, who has spent the latter half of his life bewailing the earlier and more brilliant part, would have been abhorrent to the Frenchman, who died as he had lived, impenitent. Stendhal was a man, not a purveyor of words, nor a maker of images. Not poetic, yet he did not fail to value Dante and Angelo. Virile, cynical, sensual, the greatest master of psychology of his age, he believed in action rather than thought. Literature he pretended to detest. Not a spinner of cobwebs, he left no definite system; it remained for Taine to gather together the loose strands of his sane, strong ideas and formulate them. He saw the world clearly, without sentiment—he, the most sentimental of men—and he had a horror of German mole-hill metaphysics. The eighteenth century with its hard logic, its deification of Reason, its picturesque atheism, enlisted Beyle's sympathies. Socialism was for him anathema.

Love and art were his watchwords. His love of art was on a sound basis. Joyous, charming music like Mozart's, Rossini's, Cimarosa's, appealed to him; and Correggio, with his sensuous coloring and voluptuous design, was his favorite painter. He was complex, but not morbid. The artistic progenitor of a long line of analysts, supermen, criminals, and æsthetic ninnies, he probably would have disclaimed the entire crowd, including the faithful Stendhalians, because

the latter have so widely departed from his canons of simplicity and sunniness in art.

But Stendhal left the soul out of his scheme of life; never did he knock at the gate of her dwelling-place. Believing with Napoleon that because the surgeon's scalpel did not lay bare any trace of the soul, there was none, Stendhal practically denied her existence. For this reason his windows do not open upon eternity. They command fair, charming prospects. Has he not written: "J'ai recherché avec une sensibilité exquise la vue des beaux paysages. . . . Les paysages etaient comme un archet qui jouait sur mon âme"? He meant his nerves, not his soul. Spiritual overtones are not sounded in his work. A materialist (a singularly unhappy home and maladroit education are to blame for much of his errors in after life), he was, at least, no hypocrite. He loved beautiful art, women, landscapes, brave feats. He confesses, in a letter to Colomb, dated November 25, 1817, to planning a History of Energy in Italy (both Taine and Barrès later transposed the theme to France with varying results). A tissue of contradictions, he somehow or other emerges from the mists and artistic embroilments of the earlier half of the last century a robust, soldierly, yet curious, subtle and enigmatic figure. It is best to employ in describing him his own favorite definition—he was "different." And has he not said that difference engenders hatred?

VI

In his brilliant and much-abused book, A Rebours, the late J.-K. Huysmans describes the antics of a feeble-brained young nobleman who, having saturated himself with Baedeker's London, the novels of Dickens, English roast beef and ale, came to the comical conclusion that he might be disappointed if he crossed the Channel, so after a few hours

spent within the hospitable walls of a Parisian English bar he gathered up his plaids, traps, walking-stick, and calmly returned to his home near the French capital. He had travelled to England in the easy-chair mentioned by Goldsmith —better after all than not travelling at all. Circumstances condemn many of us to this mode of motion, which comes well within the definition of our great-grandfathers, who called it The Pleasures of the Imagination.

But there are, luckily for them, many who are not compelled to assist at this intellectual Barmecide's feast. They go and they come, and no man says them nay. Whether they see as much as those who voyaged in the more leisurely manner of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is open to doubt. Europe or Asia through a car-window is only a series of rapidly dissolving slides, pictures that live for brief seconds. Modern travel is impressionistic. Nature viewed through a nebulous blur. Our grandfathers, if they didn't go as far as their descendants, contrived to see more, to see a lot of delightful little things, note a myriad of minute traits of the country through which they paced at such a snail's gait. Nowadays we hurriedly glance at the names of railroad stations. The ideal method of locomotion is really that of the pedestrian—shanks'-mare ought to be popular. Vernon Lee spoke thus of our hero: "'Tis the mode of travelling that constituted the delight and matured the genius of Stendhal, king of cosmopolitans and grand master of the psychologic novel."

It is interesting to turn back and flutter the pages of that perennially delightful book, Promenades dans Rome. Italy may truthfully be said to have been engraved upon the author's heart. Under the heading Manner of Travelling From Paris to Rome, dated March 25, 1828, he tells his readers, few but fit, how he made that wonderful trip.

One of the best ways, writes Stendhal, is to take a post-chaise, or a light *calèche,* and made in Vienna. Carry little

baggage. It only means vexation at the various custom-houses, bother with the police—who treat all travellers as spies or suspected persons—and it will surely attract bandits. Besides, prices are instantly doubled when a post-chaise arrives. There is the mail-coach. It rolls along comfortably. In its capacious interior one may sleep, watch the scenery, converse, or read. You can go to Béfort or Basel if you desire to pass the north of la Suisse, or to Pontarlier or Ferney, if desirous of reaching the Simplon. You may take the mail to Lyons or Grenoble, and pass by Mont Cenis; or until Draguignan if you wish to escape the mountains and enter Italy by the beautiful highway, the work of M. de Chabral. You arrive at Nice and pass on to Genoa. This is the ideal route for scenery.

But, continues Stendhal, the most expeditious and the interesting way, the one he usually took, begins with a forty-eight hour ride in the diligence as far as Béfort; a carriage for which you pay a dozen francs will conduct you to Basel. Once there you may take a diligence for Lucerne—that singular and dangerous lake, the theatre of William Tell's exploits, impressively remarks Stendhal (they believed in the Tell legend, those innocent times)—and attain Altdorf. Here Tell and the apple will arouse your imagination. Then Italy may be entered by Saint Gothard, Bellinzona, Como, and Milan. *Via* the Simplon was more to the taste of our writer. He often took the diligence, which at Basel went to Bern; arriving in the Rhone valley by way of Louèche and Tourtemagne, he would find his baggage, which had gone around by Lausanne, Saint Maurice, and Sion. He tells us that the conductor of the excellent diligence plying between Lausanne and Domo d'Ossola was a superior man; a glimpse of his calm Swiss features drives away all fear of danger. For ten years three times a week this conductor has passed the Simplon. He did not encounter avalanches. Anyhow, the Simplon route is less dangerous than Mont

Cenis; there are fewer precipices and the edge of the road is bordered by trees; if the horses ran away the coach would not be overturned into the abyss. And since the opening of the Simplon route, Stendhal gravely notes, only forty travellers have perished, nine of them unhappy Italian soldiers returning from Russia. Are not these details of a savory simplicity, like the faded odor of sandalwood which meets your nostrils when you open some old secretary of your grandparents?

Kept by a man from Lyons was a fine inn on the Simplon route in those days. Stendhal never failed to record where could be found good wines, cooking, and clean sheets. He usually paid twelve francs for a carriage to Domo d'Ossola, Lac Majeur (Lago Maggiore) *vis-à-vis* to the Borromean Islands. Four hours in a boat to Sesto Calende, and five hours in a fast coach—behold, Milan! Or you can reach Milan *via* Varese. Milan to Mantua in the regular diligence. Thence to Bologna by a carriage, there the mail-coach. You go to Rome by the superb routes of Ancona and Loreto. You must pay thirty or thirty-five francs on the coach between Milan and Bologna. Stendhal assures us that he often found good company in the carriages that traverse the distance from Bologna to Florence. It took two days to cover twenty leagues and cost twenty francs. From Florence to Rome he consumed four or five days, going by Perugia in preference to Siena. Once he travelled in company with three priests, of whom he was suspicious until the ice was broken; then with joyous anecdotes they passed the time, and he is surprised to find these clerical men, who said their prayers openly three times a day without being embarrassed by the presence of strangers, were very human, very companionable. With his accustomed naïve expression of pleasure, he writes that they saved him considerable annoyance at the custom-house.

And to-day, eighty years later, we take a train *de luxe*

at Paris and in thirty hours we are in the Eternal City. It is swifter, more comfortable, and safer, our way of travelling, than Stendhal's, but that we see as much as he did we greatly doubt. The motor-car is an improvement on the mail-coach and the express train; you may, if you will, travel leisurely and privately from Paris to Rome. Or, why not hire a stout little carriage and go through Tuscany in an old-fashioned manner as did the Chevalier de Pensieri-Vani! Few may hope to store as many memories as Stendhal, yet we should see more than the occupants of railroad drawing-rooms that whiz by us on the road to Rome.

VII

Even in our days of hasty production the numerous books of Stendhal provoke respectful consideration. What leisure they had in the first half of the last century! What patience was shown by the industrious man who worked to ward off *ennui!* He must have written twenty-five volumes. In 1906 the *Mercure de France* printed nineteen newly discovered letters to his London friend, Sutton Sharpe (Beyle visited London occasionally; he corresponded with Thomas Moore the poet, and once he spent an evening at a club in the company of the humorist, Theodore Hook). But the titles of many of his books suffice; the majority of them are negligible. Who wishes to read his lives of Rossini, Haydn, Mozart, Metastasio? His life of Napoleon, posthumously published in 1876, is of more interest; Beyle had seen his subject in the flesh and blood. His Racine et Shakespeare is worth while for the Stendhalian; none but the fanatical kind would care to read the History of Painting in Italy. There is the Correspondence, capital diversion, ringing with Stendhalian wit and prejudice; and Promenades dans Rome is a classic; not inferior are Mémoires d'un Touriste, or

Rome, Naples, et Florence. Indeed, the influence of the Promenades has been pronounced. His three finished novels are Armance, Le Rouge et le Noir—which does not derive its title from the gambling game, but opposes the sword and the soutane, red and black—and La Chartreuse de Parme. The short stories show him at his best, his form being enforced to concision, his style suiting the brief passionate recitals of love, crime, intrigue, and adventure—for the most part, old Italian anecdotes recast; as the Italian tales of Hewlett are influenced by Stendhal. L'Abbesse de Castro could hardly have been better done by Mérimée. In the same volume are Les Cenci, Vittoria Accoramboni, Vanina Vanini, and La Duchesse de Palliano, all replete with dramatic excitement and charged with Italian atmosphere. San Francesca a Ripa is a thrilling tale; so are the stories contained in Nouvelles Inédites, Féder (le Mari d'Argent), Le Juif (Filippo Ebreo)—the latter Balzac might have signed; and the unfinished novel, Le Chasseur Vert, which was at first given three other titles: Leuwen, l'Orange de Malte, Les Bois de Prémol. It promised to be a rival to Le Rouge et le Noir. Lucien Leuwen, the young cavalry officer, is Stendhal himself, and he is, like Julien Sorel, the first progenitor of a long line in French fiction; disillusioned youths who, after the electric storms caused by the Napoleonic apparition, end in the sultry dilettantism of Jean, duc d'Esseintes of Huysmans's A Rebours and in the pages of Maurice Barrès. From Beyle to Huysmans is not such a remote modulation as might be imagined. Nor are those sick souls of Goncourt, Charles Demailly and Coriolis, without the taint of *beylisme*. Lucien Leuwen is a highly organized young man who goes to a small provincial town where his happiness, his one love-affair, is wrecked by the malice of his companions. There is a sincerer strain in the book than in some of its predecessors.

Armance, Stendhal's first attempt at fiction, is unpleas-

ant; the theme is an impossible one—pathology obtrudes its ugly head. Yet, Armance de Zohilhoff is a creature who interests; she was sketched from life, Stendhal tells us, a companion to a lady of left-handed rank. She is an unhappy girl and her marriage to a eunuch, Octave de Malivert, is a tragedy. Lamiel, a posthumous novel, published by Casimir Stryienski in 1888, contains an *avant-propos* by Stendhal dated from Cività Vecchia, May 25, 1840. (His prefaces are masterpieces of sly humor and ironical malice.) It is a very disagreeable fiction—Lamiel is the criminal woman with all the stigmata described by Lombroso in his Female Delinquent. She is wonderfully portrayed with her cruelty, coldness, and ferocity. She, too, like her creator, exclaimed, "Is that all?" after her first bought experience in love. She becomes attached to a scoundrel from the galleys, and sets fire to a palace to avenge his death. She is burned to cinders. A hunchback doctor, Sansfin by name, might have stepped from a page of Le Sage.

The Stendhal heroines betray their paternity. Madame de Renal, who sacrifices all for Julien Sorel, is the softest-hearted, most womanly of his characters. She is of the same sweet, maternal type as Madame Arnoux in Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale, though more impulsive. Her love passages with Julien are the most original in French fiction. Mathilde de la Môle, pedant, frigid, perverse, snobbish, has nevertheless fighting blood in her veins. (Lamiel is a caricature of her.) What could be more evocative of Salome than her kneeling before Julien's severed head? Clelia Conti in the Chartreuse is like the conventional heroine of Italian romance. She is too sentimental, too prudish with her vow and its sophistical evasion. The queen of Stendhal women is Gina, *la duchesse* Sanseverina. She makes one of the immortal quartet in nineteenth-century fiction—the other three being Valérie Marneffe, Emma Bovary, and Anna Karénina. Perhaps if Madame de Chas-

teller in Le Chasseur Vert had been a finished portrait, she might have ranked after Gina in interest. That lovable lady, with the morals of a *grande dame* out of the Italian Renaissance, will never die. She embodies all the energy, tantalizing charm, and paradox of Beyle. And a more vital woman has not swept through literature since the Elizabethans. At one time he dreamed of conquering the theatre. Adolphe Brisson saw the *ébauches* for several plays; at least fifteen scenarios or the beginnings of them have been found in his literary remains. Nothing came of his efforts to become a second Molière.

Zola places Le Rouge et le Noir above La Chartreuse de Parme; so does Rod. The first novel is more sombre, more tragic; it contains masterly characterizations, but it is depressing and in spots duller than the Chartreuse. Its author was too absorbed in his own ego to become a master-historian of manners. Yet what a book is the Chartreuse for a long day. What etched landscapes are in it—notably the descriptions of Lake Como! What evocations of enchanting summer afternoons in Italy floating down the mirror-like stream under a blue sky, with the entrancing Duchess! The episodes of Parmesan court intrigue are models of observation and irony. Beyle's pen was never more delightful, it drips honey and gall. He is master of dramatic situations; witness the great scene in which the old Duke, Count Mosca, and Gina participate. At the close you hear the whirring of the theatre curtain. Count Mosco, it is said, was a portrait of Metternich; rather it was Stendhal's friend, Count de Saurau. In sooth, he is also very much like Stendhal—Stendhal humbly awaiting orders from the woman he loves. That Mosca was a tremendous scoundrel we need not doubt; yet, like Metternich and Bismarck, he could be cynical enough to play the game honestly. Despite the rusty melodramatic machinery of the book, its passionate silhouettes, its Pellico prisons, its noble bandit,

its poisons, its hair-breadth escapes, duels and assassinations—these we must accept as the slag of Beyle's genius—there is ore rich enough in it to compensate us for the *longueurs*.

Of his disquisition, De l'Amour, with its famous theory of "crystallization," much could be written. Not founded on a basic physiological truth as is Schopenhauer's doctrine of love, Beyle's is wider in scope. It deals more with manners than fundamentals. It is a manual of tactics in the art of love by a superior strategist. His knowledge of woman on the social side, at least, is unparalleled. His definitions and classifications are keener, deeper than Michelet's or Balzac's. "Femmes! femmes! vous êtes bien toujours les mêmes," he cries in a letter to a fair correspondent. It is a quotidian truth that few before him had the courage or clairvoyancy to enunciate. Crowded with crisp epigrams and worldly philosophy, this book on Love may be studied without exhausting its wisdom and machiavellianism.

Stendhal as an art or musical critic cannot be taken seriously, though he says some illuminating things; embedded in platitudes may be found shrewd *aperçus* and flashes of insight; but the trail of the "gifted amateur" is over them all. At a time when Beethoven was in the ascendant, when Berlioz—who hailed from the environs of Grenoble—was in the throes of the "new music," when Bach had been rediscovered, Beyle prattles of Cimarosa. He provoked Berlioz with his praise of Rossini—"les plus irritantes stupidités sur la musique, dont il croyait avoir le secret," wrote Berlioz of the Rossini biography. Lavoix went further: "Ecrivain d'esprit . . . fanfaron d'ignorance en musique." Poor Stendhal! He had no *flair* for the various artistic movements about him, although he had unwittingly originated several. He praised Goethe and Schiller, yet never mentioned Bach, Beethoven, Chopin; music for him meant operatic music, some other "divine adventure" to fill in the

background of conversation. Conversation! In that art he was virtuoso. To dine alone was a crime in his eyes. A *gourmet,* he cared more for talk than eating. He could not make up his mind about Weber's Freischütz, and Meyerbeer he did not very much like; "he is said to be the first pianist of Europe," he wrote; at the time, Liszt and Thalberg were disputing the kingdom of the keyboard. It was Stendhal, so the story goes, who once annoyed Liszt at a *musicale* in Rome by exclaiming in his most elliptical style: "*Mon cher* Liszt, pray give us your *usual* improvisation this evening!"

As a plagiarist Stendhal was a success. He "adapted" from Goethe, translated entire pages from the *Edinburgh Review,* and the material of his History of Painting in Italy he pilfered from Lanzi. More barefaced still was his wholesale appropriation of Carpani's Haydine, which he coolly made over into French as a life of Haydn. The Italian author protested in a Paduan journal, *Giornale dell' Italiana Letteratura,* calling Stendhal by his absurd pen-name: "M. Louis-Alexander-César Bombet, *soi-disant* Français auteur des Haydine." The original book appeared in 1812 at Milan. Stendhal published his plagiarism at Paris, 1814, but asserted that it had been written in 1808. He did not stop at mere piracy, for in 1816 and in an open letter to the *Constitutionnel* he fabricated a brother for the aforesaid Bombet and wrote an indignant denial of the facts. He spoke of César Bombet as an invalid incapable of defending his good name. The life of Mozart is a very free adaptation from Schlichtegroil's. When Shakespeare, Handel, and Richard Wagner plundered, they plundered magnificently; in comparison, Stendhal's stealings are absurd.

Irritating as are his inconsistencies, his prankishness, his bombastic affectations, and pretensions to a superior immorality, Stendhal's is nevertheless an enduring figure in French literature. His power is now felt in Germany,

where it is augmented by Nietzsche's popularity—Nietzsche, who, after Mérimée, was Stendhal's greatest pupil. Pascal had his "abyss," Stendhal had his fear of *ennui*—it was almost pathologic, this obsession of boredom. One side of his many-sided nature was akin to Pepys, a French Pepys, who chronicled immortal small-beer. However, it is his heart's history that will make this protean old faun eternally youthful. As a prose artist he does not count for much. But in the current of his swift, clear narrative and under the spell of his dry magic and peptonized concision we do not miss the peacock graces and colored splendors of Flaubert or Chateaubriand. Stendhal delivers himself of a story rapidly; he is all sinew. And he is the most seductive spiller of souls since Saint-Simon.

VII

THE BAUDELAIRE LEGEND

I

For the sentimental no greater foe exists than the iconoclast who dissipates literary legends. And he is abroad nowadays. Those golden times when they gossipped of De Quincey's enormous opium consumption, of the gin absorbed by gentle Charles Lamb, of Coleridge's dark ways, Byron's escapades, and Shelley's atheism—alas! into what faded limbo have they vanished. Poe, too, Poe whom we saw in fancy reeling from Richmond to Baltimore, Baltimore to Philadelphia, Philadelphia to New York. Those familiar fascinating anecdotes have gone the way of all such jerry-built spooks. We now know Poe to have been a man suffering at the time of his death from cerebral lesion, a man who drank at intervals and but little. Dr. Guerrier of Paris has exploded a darling superstition about De Quincey's opium-eating. He has demonstrated that no man could have lived so long—De Quincey was nearly seventy-five at his death—and worked so hard, if he had consumed twelve thousand drops of laudanum as often as he said he did. Furthermore, the English essayist's description of the drug's effects is inexact. He was seldom sleepy—a sure sign, asserts Dr. Guerrier, that he was not altogether enslaved by the drug habit. Sprightly in old age, his powers of labor were prolonged until past three-score and ten. His imagination needed little opium to produce the famous Confessions. Even Gautier's revolutionary red waistcoat worn at the *première* of Hernani was, according to Gautier, a pink doublet. And Rousseau has been whitewashed. So they are disappearing, those literary legends, until, dis-

heartened, we cry out: Spare us our dear, old-fashioned, disreputable men of genius!

But the legend of Charles Baudelaire is seemingly indestructible. This French poet himself has suffered more from the friendly malignant biographer and Parisian chroniclers than did Poe. Who shall keep the curs out of the cemetery? asked Baudelaire after he had read Griswold on Poe. A few years later his own cemetery was invaded and the world was put in possession of the Baudelaire legend; that legend of the atrabilious, irritable poet, dandy, maniac, his hair dyed green, spouting blasphemies; that grim, despairing image of a Diabolic, a libertine, saint, and drunkard. Maxime du Camp was much to blame for the promulgation of these tales—witness his Souvenirs Littéraires. However, it may be confessed that part of the Baudelaire legend was created by Charles Baudelaire. In the history of literature it is difficult to parallel such a deliberate piece of self-stultification. Not Villon, who preceded him, not Verlaine, who imitated him, drew for the astonishment or disedification of the world like unflattering portraits. Mystifier as he was, he must have suffered at times from acute cortical irriation. And, notwithstanding his desperate effort to realize Poe's idea, he only proved Poe correct, who had said that no man can bare his heart quite naked; there will be always something held back, something false too ostentatiously thrust forward. The grimace, the attitude, the pomp of rhetoric are so many buffers between the soul of man and the sharp reality of published confessions. Baudelaire was no more exception to this rule than St. Augustine, Bunyan, Rousseau, or Huysmans; though he was as frank as any of them, as we may see in the recently printed diary, Mon cœur mis à nu (Posthumous Works, Société du Mercure de France); and in the Journal, Fusées, Letters, and other fragments exhumed by devoted Baudelarians.

To smash legends, Eugène Crépet's biographical study, first printed in 1887, has been republished with new notes by his son, Jacques Crépet. This is an exceedingly valuable contribution to Baudelaire lore; a dispassionate life, however, has yet to be written, a noble task for some young poet who will disentangle the conflicting lies originated by Baudelaire—that tragic comedian—from the truth and thus save him from himself. The new Crépet volume is really but a series of notes; there are some letters addressed to the poet by the distinguished men of his day, supplementing the rather disappointing volume of Letters, 1841–1866, published in 1908. There are also documents in the legal prosecution of Baudelaire, with memories of him by Charles Asselineau, Léon Cladel, Camille Lemonnier, and others.

In November, 1850, Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert found themselves at the French Ambassador's, Constantinople. The two friends had taken a trip in the Orient which later bore fruit in Salammbô. General Aupick, the representative of the French Government, received the young men cordially; they were presented to his wife, Madame Aupick. She was the mother of Charles Baudelaire, and inquired of Du Camp, rather anxiously: "My son has talent, has he not?" Unhappy because her second marriage, a brilliant one, had set her son against her, the poor woman welcomed from such a source confirmation of her eccentric boy's gifts. Du Camp tells the much-discussed story of a quarrel between the youthful Charles and his stepfather, a quarrel that began at table. There were guests present. After some words Charles bounded at the General's throat and sought to strangle him. He was promptly boxed on the ears and succumbed to a nervous spasm. A delightful anecdote, one that fills with joy psychiatrists in search of a theory of genius and degeneration. Charles was given some money and put on board a ship sailing to East India. He became a cattle-dealer in the British

army, and returned to France years afterward with a *Vénus noire,* to whom he addressed extravagant poems! All this according to Du Camp. Here is another tale, a comical one. Baudelaire visited Du Camp in Paris, and his hair was violently green. Du Camp said nothing. Angered by this indifference, Baudelaire asked: "You find nothing abnormal about me?" "No," was the answer. "But my hair—it is green!" "That is not singular, *mon cher* Baudelaire; every one has hair more or less green in Paris." Disappointed in not creating a sensation, Baudelaire went to a café, gulped down two large bottles of Burgundy, and asked the waiter to remove the water, as water was a disagreeable sight for him; then he went away in a rage. It is a pity to doubt this green hair legend; presently a man of genius will not be able to enjoy an epileptic fit in peace—as does a banker or a beggar. We are told that St. Paul, Mahomet, Handel, Napoleon, Flaubert, Dostoïevsky were epileptoids; yet we do not encounter men of this rare kind among the inmates of asylums. Even Baudelaire had his sane moments.

The joke of the green hair has been disposed of by Crépet. Baudelaire's hair thinning after an illness, he had his head shaved and painted with salve of a green hue, hoping thereby to escape baldness. At the time when he had embarked for Calcutta (May, 1841), he was not seventeen, but twenty, years of age. Du Camp said he was seventeen when he attacked General Aupick. The dinner could not have taken place at Lyons because the Aupick family had left that city six years before the date given by Du Camp. Charles was provided with five thousand francs for his expenses, instead of twenty—Du Camp's version—and he never was a beef-drover in the British army, for a good reason—he never reached India. Instead, he disembarked at the Isle of Bourbon, and after a short stay was seized by homesickness and returned to France, being absent

about ten months. But, like Flaubert, on his return home Baudelaire was seized with the nostalgia of the East; out there he had yearned for Paris. Jules Claretie recalls Baudelaire saying to him with a grimace: "I love Wagner; but the music I prefer is that of a cat hung up by his tail outside of a window, and trying to stick to the panes of glass with its claws. There is an odd grating on the glass which I find at the same time strange, irritating, and singularly harmonious." Is it necessary to add that Baudelaire, notorious in Paris for his love of cats, dedicating poems to cats, would never have perpetrated such revolting cruelty?

Another misconception, a critical one, is the case of Poe and Baudelaire. The young Frenchman first became infatuated with Poe's writings in 1846 or 1847—he gives these two dates, though several stories of Poe had been translated into French as early as 1841 or 1842; L'Orang-Outang was the first, which we know as The Murders in the Rue Morgue; Madame Meunier also adapted several Poe stories for the reviews. Baudelaire's labors as a translator lasted over ten years. That he assimilated Poe, that he idolized Poe, is a commonplace of literary gossip. But that Poe had overwhelming influence in the formation of his poetic genius is not the truth. Yet we find such an acute critic as the late Edmund Clarence Stedman writing, "Poe's chief influence upon Baudelaire's own production relates to poetry." It is precisely the reverse. Poe's influence affected Baudelaire's prose, notably in the disjointed confessions, Mon cœur mis à nu, which recall the American writer's Marginalia. The bulk of the poetry in Les Fleurs de Mal was written before Baudelaire had read Poe, though not published in book form until 1857. But in 1855 some of the poems saw the light in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, while many of them had been put forth a decade or fifteen years before as fugitive verse in various magazines. Stedman was not the first to make this mistake. In Bayard

Taylor's The Echo Club we find on page 24 this criticism: "There was a congenital twist about Poe. . . . Baudelaire and Swinburne after him have been trying to surpass him by increasing the dose; but his muse is the natural Pythia, inheriting her convulsions, while they eat all sorts of insane roots to produce theirs." This must have been written about 1872, and after reading it one would fancy Poe and Baudelaire were rhapsodic wrigglers on the poetic tripod, whereas their poetry is often reserved, even glacial. Baudelaire, like Poe, sometimes "built his nests with the birds of Night," and that was enough to condemn the work of both men with critics of the didactic school.

Once, when Baudelaire heard that an American man-of-letters (?) was in Paris, he secured an introduction and called. Eagerly inquiring after Poe, he learned that he was not considered a genteel person in America. Baudelaire withdrew, muttering maledictions. Enthusiastic poet! Charming literary person! But the American, whoever he was, represented public opinion at the time. To-day criticisms of Poe are vitiated by the desire to make him an angel. It is to be doubted whether without his barren environment and hard fortunes we should have had Poe at all. He had to dig down deeper into the pit of his personality to reach the central core of his music. But every ardent young soul entering "literature" begins by a vindication of Poe's character. Poe was a man, and he is now a classic. He was a half-charlatan as was Baudelaire. In both the sublime and the sickly were never far asunder. The pair loved to mystify, to play pranks on their contemporaries. Both were implacable pessimists. Both were educated in affluence, and both had to face unprepared the hardships of life. The hastiest comparison of their poetic work will show that their only common ideal was the worship of an exotic beauty. Their artistic methods of expression were totally dissimilar. Baudelaire, like Poe, had a harp-like tempera-

ment which vibrated in the presence of strange subjects. Above all he was obsessed by sex. Woman, as angel of destruction, is the keynote of his poems. Poe was almost sexless. His aerial creatures never footed the dusty highways of the world. His lovely lines, "Helen, thy beauty is to me," could never have been written by Baudelaire; while Poe would never have pardoned the "fulgurant" grandeur, the Beethoven-like harmonies, the Dantesque horrors of that "deep wide music of lost souls" in "Femmes Damnées":

> Descendez, descendez, lamentables victimes.

Or this, which might serve as a text for one of John Martin's vast sinister mezzotints:

> J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
> Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,
> Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
> Une miraculeuse aurore;
>
> J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
> Un être, qui n'était que lumière or et gaze,
> Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
> Mais mon cœur que jamais ne visite l'extase,
> Est un théâtre où l'on attend
> Toujours, toujours en vain l'Etre aux ailes de gaze.

Professor Saintsbury thus sums up the differences between Poe and Baudelaire: "Both authors—Poe and De Quincey—fell short of Baudelaire himself as regards depth and fulness of passion, but both have a superficial likeness to him in eccentricity of temperament and affection for a certain peculiar mixture of grotesque and horror." Poe is without passion, except a passion for the *macabre;* for what Huysmans calls "The October of the sensations"; whereas, there is a gulf of despair and terror and humanity in Baudelaire which shakes your nerves yet stimulates the imagination. However, profounder as a poet, he was no match for Poe in what might be termed intellectual presti-

digitation. The mathematical Poe, the Poe of the ingenious detective tales, tales extraordinary, the Poe of the swift flights into the cosmical blue, the Poe the prophet and mystic—in these the American was more versatile than his French translator. That Baudelaire said, "Evil, be thou my good," is doubtless true. He proved all things and found them vanity. He is the poet of original sin, a worshipper of Satan for the sake of paradox; his Litanies to Satan ring childish to us—in his heart he was a believer. His was "an infinite reverse aspiration," and mixed up with his pose was a disgust for vice, for life itself. He was the last of the Romanticists; Sainte-Beuve called him the Kamtschatka of Romanticism; its remotest hyperborean peak. Romanticism is dead to-day, as dead as Naturalism; but Baudelaire is alive, and is read. His glistening phosphorescent trail is over French poetry and he is the begetter of a school:—Verlaine, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Carducci, Arthur Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue, Verhaeren, and many of the youthful crew. He affected Swinburne, and in Huysmans, who was not a poet, his splenetic spirit lives. Baudelaire's motto might be the opposite of Browning's lines: "The Devil is in heaven. All's wrong with the world."

When Goethe said of Hugo and the Romanticists that they all came from Chateaubriand, he should have substituted the name of Rousseau—"Romanticism, it is Rousseau," exclaims Pierre Lassere. But there is more of Byron and Petrus Borel—a forgotten mad poet—in Baudelaire; though, for a brief period, in 1848, he became a Rousseau reactionary, sported the workingman's blouse, shaved his head, shouldered a musket, went to the barricades, wrote inflammatory editorials calling the proletarian "Brother!" (oh, Baudelaire!) and, as the Goncourts recorded in their diary, had the head of a maniac. How seriously we may take this swing of the pendulum is to be noted in a speech of the poet's at the time of the Revolution: "Come," he said,

"let us go shoot General Aupick!" It was his stepfather that he thought of, not the eternal principles of Liberty. This may be a false anecdote; many were foisted upon Baudelaire. For example, his exclamations at cafés or in public places, such as: "Have you ever eaten a baby? I find it pleasing to the palate!" or, "The night I killed my father!" Naturally people stared and Baudelaire was happy —he had startled the bourgeois. The cannibalistic idea he may have borrowed from Swift's amusing pamphlet, for this French poet knew English literature.

Gautier compares the poems to a certain tale of Hawthorne's in which there is a garden of poisoned flowers. But Hawthorne worked in his laboratory of evil wearing mask and gloves; he never descended into the mud and sin of the street. Baudelaire ruined his health, smudged his soul, yet remained withal, as Anatole France says, "a divine poet." How childish, yet how touching is his resolution—he wrote in his diary of prayer's dynamic force—when he was penniless, in debt, threatened with imprisonment, sick, nauseated with sin: "To make every morning my prayer to God, the reservoir of all force, and all justice; to my father, to Mariette, and to Poe as intercessors." (Evidently, Maurice Barrès encountered here his theory of Intercessors.) Baudelaire loved the memory of his father as much as Stendhal hated his. His mother he became reconciled with after the death of General Aupick, in 1857. He felt in 1862 that his own intellectual eclipse was approaching, for he wrote: "I have cultivated my hysteria with joy and terror. To-day imbecility's wing fanned me as it passed." The sense of the vertiginous gulf was abiding with him; read his poem, "Pascal avait son gouffre."

In preferring the Baudelaire translations of Poe to the original—and they give the impression of being original works—Stedman agreed with Asselineau that the French is more concise than the English. The prose of Poe and

Baudelaire is clear, sober, rhythmic; Baudelaire's is more lapidary, finer in contour, richer colored, more supple, though without the "honey and tiger's blood" of Barbey d'Aurevilly's. Baudelaire's soul was patiently built up as a fabulous bird might build its nest—bits of straw, the sobbing of women, clay, cascades of black stars, rags, leaves, rotten wood, corroding dreams, a spray of roses, a sparkle of pebble, a gleam of blue sky, arabesques of incense and verdigris, despairing hearts and music and the abomination of desolation for ground-tones. But this soul-nest is also a cemetery of the seven sorrows. He loved the clouds. . . . *les nuages* . . . *là bas*. . . . It was *là bas* with him even in the tortures of his wretched love-life. Corruption and death were ever floating in his consciousness. He was like Flaubert, who saw everywhere the hidden skeleton. Félicien Rops has best interpreted Baudelaire: the etcher and poet were closely knit spirits. Rodin, too, is a Baudelarian. If there could be such an anomaly as a native wood-note evil, it would be the lyric and astringent voice of this poet. His sensibility was both catholic and morbid, though he could be frigid in the face of the most disconcerting misfortunes. He was a man for whom the visible word existed; if Gautier was pagan, Baudelaire was a strayed spirit from mediæval days. The spirit ruled, and, as Paul Bourget said, "he saw God." A Manichean in his worship of evil, he nevertheless abased his soul: "Oh! Lord God! Give me the force and courage to contemplate my heart and my body without disgust," he prays: But as some one remarked to Rochefoucauld, "Where you end, Christianity begins."

Baudelaire built his ivory tower on the borders of a poetic Maremma, in which every miasma of the spirit pervaded, every marsh-light and glow-worm inhabited. Like Wagner, Baudelaire painted in his sultry music the profundities of abysms, the vastness of space. He painted, too, the great nocturnal silences of the soul.

Pacem summum tenent! He never reached peace on the heights. Let us admit that souls of his kind are encased in sick frames; their steel is too shrewd for the scabbard; yet the enigma for us is none the less unfathomable. Existence for such natures is a sort of muffled delirium. To affiliate him with Poe, De Quincey, Hoffmann, James Thomson, Coleridge, and the rest of the sombre choir does not explain him; he is, perhaps, nearer Donne and Villon than any of the others—strains of the metaphysical and sinister and supersubtle are to be discovered in him. The disharmony of brain and body, the spiritual bi-location, are only too easy to diagnose; but the remedy? *Hypocrite lecteur—mon semblable—mon frère!* When the subtlety, force, grandeur, of his poetic production be considered, together with its disquieting, nervous, vibrating qualities, it is not surprising that Victor Hugo wrote to the poet: "You invest the heaven of art with we know not what deadly rays; you create a new shudder." Hugo could have said that he turned Art into an Inferno. Baudelaire is the evil archangel of poetry. In his heaven of fire, glass, and ebony he is the blazing Lucifer. "A glorious devil, large in heart and brain, that did love beauty only . . ." sang Tennyson.

II

As long ago as 1869 and in our "barbarous gas-lit country," as Baudelaire named the land of Poe, an unsigned review appeared in which this poet was described as "unique and as interesting as Hamlet. He is that rare and unknown being, a genuine poet—a poet in the midst of things that have disordered his spirit—a poet excessively developed in his taste for and by beauty . . . very responsive to the ideal, very greedy of sensation." A better description of Baudelaire does not exist. The Hamlet-motive, particularly,

is one that sounded throughout the disordered symphony of the poet's life.

He was, later, revealed to American readers by Henry James. This was in 1878, when appeared the first edition of French Poets and Novelists. Previous to that there had been some desultory discussion, a few essays in the magazines, and in 1875 a sympathetic paper by Professor James Albert Harrison of the University of Virginia. But Mr. James had the ear of a cultured public. He denounced the Frenchman for his reprehensible taste, though he did not mention his beautiful verse or his originality in the matter of criticism. Baudelaire, in his eyes, was not only immoral, but he had, with the approbation of Sainte-Beuve, introduced Poe as a great man to the French nation. (See Baudelaire's letter to Sainte-Beuve in the newly published Letters, 1841–1866.) Perhaps Mr. Dick Minim and his projected Academy of Criticism might make clear these devious problems.

The Etudes Critiques of Edmond Schérer were collected in 1863. In them we find this unhappy, uncritical judgment: "Baudelaire, lui, n'a rien, ni le cœur, ni l'esprit, ni l'idée, ni le mot, ni la raison, ni la fantaisie, ni la verve, ni même la facture . . . son unique titre c'est d'avoir contribué à créer l'esthétique de la débauche." It is not our intention to dilate upon the injustice of this criticism. It is Baudelaire the critic of æsthetics in whom we are interested. Yet I cannot forbear saying that if all the negations of Schérer had been transformed into affirmations, only justice would have been accorded Baudelaire, who was not alone a poet, the most original of his century, but also a critic of the first rank, one who welcomed Richard Wagner when Paris hooted him, and his fellow composer, Hector Berlioz, played the rôle of the envious; one who fought for Edouard Manet, Leconte de Lisle, Gustave Flaubert, Eugène Delacroix; fought with pen for the modern etchers,

illustrators, Meryon, Daumier, Félicien Rops, Gavarni, and Constantin Guys. He literally identified himself with De Quincey and Poe, translating them so wonderfully well that some unpatriotic critics like the French better than the originals. So much was Baudelaire absorbed in Poe that a writer of his times asserted the translator would meet the same fate as the American poet. A singular, vigorous spirit is Baudelaire's, whose poetry with its "icy ecstasy" is profound and harmonic, whose criticism is penetrated by a catholic quality, who anticipated modern critics in his abhorrence of schools and environments, preferring to isolate the man and study him uniquely. He would have subscribed to Swinburne's generous pronouncement: "I have never been able to see what should attract man to the profession of criticism but the noble pleasure of praising." The Frenchman has said that it would be impossible for a critic to become a poet; and it is impossible for a poet not to contain a critic.

Théophile Gautier's study prefixed to the definitive edition of Les Fleurs du Mal is not only the most sympathetic exposition of Baudelaire as man and genius, but it is also the high-water mark of Gautier's gifts as an essayist. We learn therein how the young Charles, an incorrigible dandy, came to visit Hôtel Pimodan about 1844. In this Hôtel Pimodan a dilettante, Ferdinand Boissard, held high revel. His fantastically decorated apartments were frequented by the painters, poets, sculptors, romancers, of the day—that is, carefully selected ones such as Liszt, George Sand, Mérimée, and others whose verve or genius gave them the privilege of saying Open Sesame! to this cave of forty Supermen. Balzac has in his Peau de Chagrin pictured the same sort of scenes that were supposed to occur weekly at the Pimodan. Gautier eloquently describes the meeting of these kindred artistic souls, where the beautiful Jewess Maryx, who had posed for Ary Scheffer's Mignon and for Paul

Delaroche's La Gloire, met the superb Mme. Sabatier, the only woman that Baudelaire loved, and the original of that extraordinary group of Clésinger's—the sculptor and son-in-law of George Sand—la Femme au Serpent, a Salammbô *à la mode* in marble. Hasheesh was eaten, so Gautier writes, by Boissard and by Baudelaire. As for the creator of Mademoiselle Maupin, he was too robust for such nonsense. He had to work for his living at journalism, and he died in harness an irreproachable father, while the unhappy Baudelaire, the inheritor of an intense, unstable temperament, soon devoured his patrimony of 75,000 francs and for the remaining years of his life was between the devil of his dusky Jenny Duval and the deep sea of debt.

It was at these Pimodan gatherings, which were no doubt much less wicked than the participants would have us believe, that Baudelaire encountered Emile Deroy, a painter of skill, who made his portrait, and encouraged the fashionable young fellow to continue his art studies. We have seen an album containing sketches by the poet. They betray talent of about the same order as Thackeray's, with a superadded note of the horrific—that favorite epithet of the early Poe critics. Baudelaire admired Thackeray, and when the Englishman praised the illustrations of Guys, he was delighted. Deroy taught his pupil the commonplaces of a painter's technic; also how to compose a palette—a rather meaningless phrase nowadays. At least he did not write of the arts without some technical experience. Delacroix took up his enthusiastic disciple, and when the Salons of Baudelaire appeared in 1845, 1846, 1855, and 1859, the praise and blame they evoked were testimonies to the training and knowledge of their author. A new spirit had been born.

The names of Diderot and Baudelaire were coupled. Neither academic nor spouting the jargon of the usual critic, the Salons of Baudelaire are the production of a hu-

manist. Some would put them above Diderot's. Mr. Saintsbury, after Mr. Swinburne the warmest advocate of Baudelaire among the English, thinks that the French poet in his picture criticism observed too little and imagined too much. "In other words," he adds, "to read a criticism of Baudelaire's without the title affixed is by no means a sure method of recognizing the picture afterward." Now, word-painting was the very thing that Baudelaire avoided. It was his friend Gautier, with the plastic style, who attempted the well-nigh impossible feat of competing in his verbal descriptions with the certitudes of canvas and marble. And if he with his verbal imagination did not entirely succeed, how could a less adept manipulator of the vocabulary? We do not agree with Mr. Saintsbury. No one can imagine too much when the imagination is that of a poet. Baudelaire divined the work of the artist and set it down scrupulously in prose of rectitude. He did not paint pictures in prose. He did not divagate. He did not overburden his pages with technical terms. But the spirit he did disengage in a few swift phrases. The polemics of historical schools were a cross for him to bear, and he bore all his learning lightly. Like a true critic, he judged more by form than theme. There are no types; there is only life, he had cried before Jules Laforgue. He was ever for art-for-art, yet, having breadth of comprehension and a Heine-like capacity for seeing both sides of his own nature and its idiosyncrasies, he could write: "The puerile utopia of the school of art for art, in excluding morality, and often even passion, was necessarily sterile. All literature which refuses to advance fraternally between science and philosophy is a homicidal and a suicidal literature."

Baudelaire, then, was no less sound a critic of the plastic arts than of music and literature. Like his friend Flaubert, he had a horror of democracy, of the democratization of the arts, of all the sentimental fuss and fuddle of a

pseudo-humanitarianism. During the 1848 agitation the former dandy of 1840 put on a blouse and spoke of barricades. These things were in the air. Wagner rang the alarm-bells during the Dresden uprising. Chopin wrote for the pianoforte a revolutionary étude. Brave lads! Poets and musicians fight their battles best in the region of the ideal. Baudelaire's little attack of the equality-measles soon vanished. He lectured his brother poets and artists on the folly and injustice of abusing or despising the bourgeois (being a man of paradoxes, he dedicated a volume of his Salons to the bourgeois), but he would not have contradicted Mr. George Moore for declaring that "in art the democrat is always reactionary. In 1830 the democrats were against Victor Hugo and Delacroix." And Les Fleurs du Mal, that book of opals, blood, and evil swamp-flowers, can never be savored by the mob.

In his Souvenirs de Jeunesse, Champfleury speaks of the promenades in the Louvre he enjoyed in company with Baudelaire. Bronzino was one of the latter's preferences. He was also attracted to El Greco—not an unnatural admiration, considering the sombre extravagance of his own genius. Goya he has written of in exalted phrases. Velasquez was his touchstone. Being of a perverse nature, his nerves ruined by abuse of drink and drugs, the landscapes of his imagination or those by his friend Rousseau were more beautiful than Nature herself. The country, he declared, was odious. Like Whistler, whom he often met—see the Hommage à Delacroix by Fantin-Latour, with its portraits of Whistler, Baudelaire, Manet, Bracquemond the etcher, Legros, Delacroix, Cordier, Duranty the critic, and De Balleroy—he could not help showing his aversion to "foolish sunsets." In a word, Baudelaire, into whose brain had entered too much moonlight, was the father of a lunar school of poetry, criticism and fiction. His Samuel Cramer, in La Fanfarlo, is the literary progenitor of Jean, Duc

d'Esseintes, of Huysmans's A Rebours. Huysmans modelled at first himself on Baudelaire. His Le Drageoir aux Epices is a continuation of Petits Poèmes en Prose. And to Baudelaire's account must be laid much artificial morbid writing. Despite his pursuit of perfection in form, his influence has been too often baneful to impressionable artists in embryo. A lover of Gallic Byronism, and high-priest of the Satanic school, there was no extravagance, absurd or terrible, that he did not commit, from etching a four-part fugue on ice to skating hymns in honor of Lucifer. In his criticism alone was he the sane, logical Frenchman. And while he did not live to see the success of the Impressionist group, he would have surely acclaimed their theories and practice. Was he not an impressionist himself?

As Richard Wagner was his god in music, so Delacroix quite overflowed his æsthetic consciousness. Read Volume II of his collected works, Curiositiés Esthétiques, which contains his Salons; also his essay, Del l'Essence du Rire (worthy to be placed side by side with George Meredith's essay on Comedy). Caricaturists, French and foreign, are considered in two chapters at the close of the volume. Baudelaire was as conscientious as Gautier. He toiled around miles of mediocre canvas, saying an encouraging word to the less talented, boiling over with holy indignation, glacial irony, before the rash usurpers occupying the seats of the mighty, and pouncing on new genius with promptitude. Upon Delacroix he lavished the largesse of his admiration. He smiled at the platitudes of Horace Vernet, and only shook his head over the Schnetzes and other artisans of the day. He welcomed William Hausoullier, now so little known. He praised Devéria, Chasseriau—who waited years before he came into his own; his preferred landscapists were Corot, Rousseau and Troyon. He impolitely spoke of Ary Scheffer and the "apes of sentiment"; while his discussions of Hogarth, Cruikshank, Pinelli and

Breughel proclaim his versatility of vision. In his essay Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne he was the first among critics to recognize the peculiar quality named "modernity," that nervous, naked vibration which informs the novels of Goncourt, Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale, and the pictures of Manet, Monet, Degas and Raffaelli with their evocations of a new, nervous Paris. It is in his Volume III, entitled, L'Art Romantique, that so many things dear to the new century were then subjects of furious quarrels. This book contains much just and brilliant writing. It was easy for Nietzsche to praise Wagner in Germany in 1876, but dangerous at Paris in 1861 to declare war on Wagner's critics. This Baudelaire did.

The relations of Baudelaire and Edouard Manet were exceedingly cordial. In a letter to Théophile Thoré, the art critic (Letters, p. 361), we find Bandelaire defending his friend from the accusation that his pictures were *pastiches* of Goya. He wrote: "Manet has never seen Goya, never El Greco; he was never in the Pourtalés Gallery." Which may have been true at the time, 1864, but Manet visited Madrid and spent much time studying Velasquez and abusing Spanish cookery. (Consider, too, Goya's Balcony with Girls and Manet's famous Balcony.) Raging at the charge of imitation, Baudelaire said in this same epistle: "They accuse even me of imitating Edgar Poe. . . . Do you know why I so patiently translated Poe? *Because he resembled me.*" The poet italicised these words. With stupefaction, therefore, he admired the mysterious coincidences of Manet's work with that of Goya and El Greco.

He took Manet seriously. He wrote to him in a paternal and severe tone. Recall his reproof when urging the painter to exhibit his work. "You complain about attacks, but are you the first to endure them? Have you more genius than Chateaubriand and Wagner? They were not killed by derision. And in order not to make you too proud I must tell

you that they are models, each in his way, and in a very rich world, while *you are only the first in the decrepitude of your art.*" (Letters, p. 436.)

Would Baudelaire recall these prophetic words if he were able to revisit the glimpses of the Champs Elysées at the autumn Salons? What would he think of Césanne? Odilon Redon he would understand, for he is the transposer of Baudelairianism to terms of design and color. And perhaps the poet whose verse is saturated with tropical hues—he, when young, sailed in southern seas—might appreciate the monstrous debauch of form and color in the Tahitian canvases of Paul Gauguin.

Baudelaire's preoccupation with pictorial themes may be noted in his verse. He is *par excellence* the poet of æsthetics. To Daumier he inscribed a poem; and to the sculptor Ernest Christophe, to Delacroix (Sur Le Tasse en Prison), to Manet, to Guys (Rêve Parisien), to an unknown master (Une Martyre); and Watteau, a Watteau *à rebours,* is seen in Un Voyage à Cythère; while in Les Phares this poet of ideal, spleen, music, and perfume shows his adoration for Rubens, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, Puget, Goya, Delacroix—"Delacroix, lac de sang hanté des mauvais anges." And what could be more exquisite than his quatrain to Lola de Valence, a poetic inscription for the picture of Edouard Manet, with its last line as vaporous, as subtle as Verlaine: Le charme inattendu d'un bijou rose et noir! Heine called himself the last of the Romantics. The first of the "Moderns" and the last of the Romantics was the many-sided Charles Baudelaire.

III

He was born at Paris April 9, 1821 (Flaubert's birth year), and not April 21 as Gautier has it. His father

was Joseph Francis Baudelaire, or Beaudelaire, who occupied a government position. A cultivated art lover, his taste was apparent in the home he made for his second wife, Caroline Archimbaut-Dufays, an orphan and the daughter of a military officer. There was a considerable difference in the years of this pair; the mother was twenty-seven, the father sixty-two, at the birth of their only child. By his first marriage the elder Baudelaire had one son, Claude, who, like his half-brother Charles, died of paralysis, though a steady man of business. That great neurosis, called Commerce, has its mental wrecks, too, but no one pays attention; only when the poet falls by the wayside is the chase begun by neurologists and other soul-hunters seeking for victims. After the death of Baudelaire's father, the widow, within a year, married the handsome, ambitious Aupick, then *chef de bataillon,* lieutenant-colonel, decorated with the Legion of Honor, and later general and ambassador to Madrid, Constantinople, and London. Charles was a nervous, frail youth, but unlike most children of genius, he was a scholar and won brilliant honors at school. His stepfather was proud of him. From the Royal College of Lyons, Charles went to the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, Paris, but was expelled in 1839. Troubles soon began at home for him. He was irascible, vain, very precocious, and given to dissipation. He quarrelled with General Aupick, and disdained his mother. But she was to blame, she has confessed; she had quite forgotten the boy in the flush of her second love. He could not forget, or forgive what he called her infidelity to the memory of his father. Hamlet-like, he was inconsolable. The good bishop of Montpellier, who knew the family, said that Charles was a little crazy—second marriages usually bring woe in their train. "When a mother has such a son, she doesn't remarry," said the young poet. Charles signed himself Baudelaire-Dufays, or sometimes, Dufais. He wrote in his journal: "My an-

cestors, idiots or maniacs . . . all victims of terrible passions"; which was one of his exaggerations. His grandfather on the paternal side was a Champenois peasant, his mother's family presumably Norman, but not much is known of her forbears. Charles believed himself lost from the time his half-brother was stricken. He also believed that his instability of temperament—and he studied his "case" as would a surgeon—was the result of his parents' disparity in years.

After his return from the East, where he did not learn English, as has been said—his mother taught him as a boy to converse in and write the language—he came into his little inheritance, about fifteen thousand dollars. Two years later he was so heavily in debt that his family asked for a guardian on the ground of incompetency. He had been swindled, being young and green. How had he squandered his money? Not exactly on opera-glasses, like Gérard de Nerval, but on clothes, pictures, furniture, books. The remnant was set aside to pay his debts. Charles would be both poet and dandy. He dressed expensively but soberly, in the English fashion; his linen dazzling, the prevailing hue of his habiliments black. In height he was medium, his eyes brown, searching, luminous, the eye of a nyctalops, "eyes like ravens' "; nostrils palpitating, cleft chin, mouth expressive, sensual, the jaw strong and square. His hair was black, curly, and glossy, his forehead high, square, white. In the Deroy portrait he wears a beard; he is there, what Catulle Mendès nicknamed him: His Excellence, Monseigneur Brummel! Later he was the elegiac Satan, the author of L'Imitation de N. S. le Diable; or the Baudelaire of George Moore: "the clean-shaven face of the mock priest, the slow cold eyes and the sharp cunning sneer of the cynical libertine who will be tempted that he may better know the worthlessness of temptation." In the heyday of his blood he was perverse and deliberate. Let us credit him

with contradicting the Byronic notion that *ennui* could be best cured by dissipation; in sin Baudelaire found the saddest of all tasks. Mendès laughs at the legend of Baudelaire's violence, of his being given to explosive phrases. Despite Gautier's stories about the Hôtel Pimadon and its club of hasheesh-eaters, M. Mendès denies that Baudelaire was a victim of the hemp. What the majority of mankind does not know concerning the habits of literary workers is this prime fact: men who work hard, writing verse—and there is no mental toil comparable to it—cannot drink, or indulge in opium, without the inevitable collapse. The old-fashioned ideas of "inspiration," spontaneity, easy improvisation, the sudden bolt from heaven, are delusions still hugged by the world. To be told that Chopin filed at his music for years, that Beethoven in his smithy forged his thunderbolts, that Manet toiled like a laborer on the dock, that Baudelaire was a mechanic in his devotion to poetic work, that Gautier was a hard-working journalist, is a disillusion for the sentimental. Minerva springing full-fledged from Jupiter's skull to the desk of the poet is a pretty fancy; but Balzac and Flaubert did not encourage this fancy. Work literally killed Poe, as it killed Jules de Goncourt, Flaubert, and Daudet. Maupassant went insane because he would work and he would play the same day. Baudelaire worked and worried. His debts haunted him his life long. His constitution was flawed—Sainte-Beuve told him that he had worn out his nerves—from the start, he was *détraqué;* but that his entire life was one huge debauch is a nightmare of the moral police in some white cotton night-cap country.

His period of mental production was not brief or barren. He was a student. Du Camp's charge that he was an ignorant man is disproved by the variety and quality of his published work. His range of sympathies was large. His mistake, in the eyes of his colleagues, was to write so well

about the seven arts. Versatility is seldom given its real name—which is protracted labor. Baudelaire was one of the elect, an aristocrat, who dealt with the quintessence of art; his delicate air of a bishop, his exquisite manners, his modulated voice, aroused unusual interest and admiration. He was a humanist of distinction; he has left a hymn to Saint Francis in the Latin of the decadence. Baudelaire, like Chopin, made more poignant the phrase, raised to a higher intensity the expressiveness of art.

Women played a commanding rôle in his life. They always do with any poet worthy of the name, though few have been so frank in acknowledging this as Baudelaire. Yet he was in love more with Woman than the individual. The legend of the beautiful creature he brought from the East resolves itself into the dismal affair with Jeanne Duval. He met her in Paris, after he had been in the East. She sang at a café-concert in Paris. She was more brown than black. She was not handsome, not intelligent, not good; yet he idealized her, for she was the source of half his inspiration. To her were addressed those marvellous evocations of the Orient, of perfume, tresses, delicious mornings on strange far-away seas and "superb Byzant" domes that devils built. Baudelaire is the poet of perfumes; he is also the patron saint of *ennui*. No one has so chanted the praise of odors. His soul swims on perfume as do other souls on music, he has sung. As he grew older he seemed to hunt for more acrid odors; he often presents an elaborately chased vase the carving of which transports us, but from which the head is quickly averted. Jeanne, whom he never loved, no matter what may be said, was a sorceress. But she was impossible; she robbed, betrayed him; he left her a dozen times only to return. He was a capital draftsman with a strong nervous line and made many pen-and-ink drawings of her. They are not prepossessing. In her rapid decline, she was not allowed to want; Madame Aupick

paying her expenses in the hospital. A sordid history. She was a veritable flower of evil for Baudelaire. Yet poetry, like music, would be colorless, scentless, if it sounded no dissonances. Fancy art reduced to the beatific and banal chord of C major!

He fell in love with the celebrated Madame Sabatier, a reigning beauty, at whose salon artistic Paris assembled. She had been christened by Gautier *Madame la Presidente,* and her sumptuous beauty was portrayed by Ricard in his La Femme au Chien. She returned Baudelaire's love. They soon parted. Again a riddle that the published letters hardly solve. One letter, however, does show that Baudelaire had tried to be faithful, and failed. He could not extort from his exhausted soul the sentiment; but he put its music on paper. His most seductive lyrics were addressed to Madame Sabatier: "A la très chère, à la très-belle," a hymn saturated with love. Music, spleen, perfumes—"color, sound, perfumes call to each other as deep to deep; perfumes like the flesh of children, soft as hautboys, green like the meadows"—criminals, outcasts, the charm of childhood, the horrors of love, pride, and rebellion, Eastern landscapes, cats, soothing and false; cats, the true companions of lonely poets; haunted clocks, shivering dusks, and gloomier dawns —Paris in a hundred phases—these and many other themes this strange-souled poet, this "Dante, pacer of the shore," of Paris has celebrated in finely wrought verse and profound phrases. In a single line he contrives atmosphere; the very shape of his sentence, the ring of the syllables, arouses the deepest emotion. A master of harmonic undertones is Baudelaire. His successors have excelled him in making their music more fluid, more singing, more vaporous—all young French poets pass through their Baudelarian green-sickness—but he alone knows the secrets of moulding those metallic, free sonnets, which have the resistance of bronze; and of the despairing music that flames

from the mouths of lost souls trembling on the wharves of hell. He is the supreme master of irony and troubled voluptuousness.

Baudelaire is a masculine poet. He carved rather than sang; the plastic arts spoke to his soul. A lover and maker of images. Like Poe, his emotions transformed themselves into ideas. Bourget classified him as mystic, libertine, and analyst. He was born with a wound in his soul, to use the phrase of Père Lacordaire. (Curiously enough, he actually contemplated, in 1861, becoming a candidate for Lacordaire's vacant seat in the French Academy. Sainte-Beuve dissuaded him from this folly.) Recall Baudelaire's prayer: "Thou, O Lord, my God, grant me the grace to produce some fine lines which will prove to myself that I am not the last of men, that I am not inferior to those I contemn." Individualist, egoist, anarchist, his only thought was of letters. Jules Laforgue thus described Baudelaire: "Cat, Hindoo, Yankee, Episcopal, alchemist." Yes, an alchemist who suffocated in the fumes he created. He was of Gothic imagination, and could have said with Rolla: *Je suis venu trop tard dans un monde trop vieux.* He had an unassuaged thirst for the absolute. The human soul was his stage, he its interpreting orchestra.

In 1857 The Flowers of Evil was published by the devoted Poulet-Malassis, who afterward went into bankruptcy —a warning to publishers with a taste for fine literature. The titles contemplated were Limbes, or Lesbiennes. Hippolyte Babou suggested the one we know. These poems were suppressed on account of six, and poet and publisher summoned. As the municipal government had made a particular ass of itself in the prosecution of Gustave Flaubert and his Madame Bovary, the Baudelaire matter was disposed of in haste. He was condemned to a fine of three hundred francs, a fine which was never paid, as the objectionable poems were removed. They were printed in the

Belgian edition, and may be read in the new volume of Œuvres Posthumes.

Baudelaire was infuriated over the judgment, for he knew that his book was dramatic in expression. He had expected, like Flaubert, to emerge from the trial with flying colors; to be classed as one who wrote objectionable literature was a shock. "Flaubert had the Empress back of him," he complained; which was true; the Empress Eugénie, also the Princess Mathilde. But he worked as ever and put forth those polished intaglios called Poems in Prose, for the form of which he had taken a hint from Aloys Bertrand's Gaspard de la Nuit. He filled this form with a new content; not alone pictures, but moods, are to be found in these miniatures. Pity is their keynote, a tenderness for the abject and lowly, a revelation of sensibility that surprised those critics who had discerned in Baudelaire only a sculptor of evil. In one of his poems he described a landscape of metal, of marble and water; a babel of staircases and arcades, a palace of infinity, surrounded by the silence of eternity. This depressing yet magical dream was utilized by Huysmans in his A Rebours. But in the tiny landscapes of the Prose Poems there is nothing rigid or artificial. Indeed, the poet's deliberate attitude of artificiality is dropped. He is human. Not that the deep fundamental note of humanity is ever absent in his poems; the eternal diapason is there even when least overheard. Baudelaire is more human than Poe. His range of sympathy is wider. In this he transcends him as a poet, though his subject-matter often issues from the very dregs of life. Brother to pitiable wanderers, there is, nevertheless, no trace of cant, no "Russian pity" *à la* Dostoïevsky, no humanitarian or socialistic rhapsodies in his work. Baudelaire is an egoist. He hated the sentimental sapping of altruism. His prose-poem, Crowds, with its "bath of multitude," may have been suggested by Poe; but in Charles Lamb we find the idea:

"Are there no solitudes out of caves and the desert? or, cannot the heart, in the midst of crowds, feel frightfully alone?"

His best critical work is the Richard Wagner and Tannhäuser, a more significant essay than Nietzsche's Richard Wagner in Bayreuth; Baudelaire's polemic appeared at a more critical period in Wagner's career. Wagner sent a brief, hearty letter of thanks to the critic and made his acquaintance. To Wagner Baudelaire introduced a young Wagnerian, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. This Wagner letter is included in the volume of Crépet; but there are no letters published from Baudelaire to Franz Liszt, though they were friends. In Weimar I saw at the Liszt house several from Baudelaire which should have been included in the Letters. The poet understood Liszt and his reforms as he understood Wagner's. The German composer admired the French poet, and his Kundry, of the sultry second act, Parsifal, has a Baudelairian hue, especially in the temptation scene.

The end was at hand. Baudelaire had been steadily, rather, unsteadily, going downhill; a desperate figure, a dandy in shabby attire. He went out only after dark, he haunted the exterior boulevards, associated with birds of nocturnal plumage. He drank without thirst, ate without hunger, as he has said. A woeful decadence for this aristocrat of life and letters. Most sorrowful of sinners, his morose delectation scourged his nerves and extorted the darkest music from his lyre. He fled to Brussels, there to rehabilitate his dwindling fortunes. He gave a few lectures, and met Rops, Lemonnier, drank to forget, and forgot to work. He abused Brussels, Belgium, its people. A country where the trees are black, the flowers without odor, and where there is no conversation. He, the brilliant *causeur*, the chief *blagueur* of a circle in which young James McNeill Whistler was reduced to the rôle of a listener—

this most *spirituel* among artists found himself a failure in the Belgian capital. It may not be amiss to remind ourselves that Baudelaire was the creator of most of the paradoxes attributed, not only to Whistler, but to an entire school—if one may employ such a phrase. The frozen imperturbability of the poet, his cutting enunciation, his power of blasphemy, his hatred of Nature, his love of the artificial, have been copied by the æsthetic blades of our day. He it was who first taunted Nature with being an imitator of art, with being always the same. Oh, the imitative sunsets! Oh, the quotidian eating and drinking! And as pessimist, too, he led the mode. Baudelaire, like Flaubert, grasped the murky torch of pessimism once held by Chateaubriand, Benjamin Constant, and Senancour. Doubtless all this stemmed from Byronism. To-day it is all as stale as Byronism.

His health failed rapidly, and he didn't have money enough to pay for doctor's prescriptions; he owed for the room in his hotel. At Namur, where he was visiting the father-in-law of Félicien Rops (March, 1866), he suffered from an attack of paralysis. He was removed to Brussels. His mother, who lived at Honfleur, in mourning for her husband, came to his aid. Taken to France, he was placed in a sanatorium. Aphasia set in. He could only ejaculate a mild oath, and when he caught sight of himself in the mirror he would bow pleasantly as if to a stranger. His friends rallied, and they were among the most distinguished people in Paris, the *élite* of souls. Ladies visited him, one or two playing Wagner on the piano—which must have added a fresh *nuance* to death—and they brought him flowers. He expressed his love for flowers and music to the last. He could not bear the sight of his mother; she revived in him some painful memories, but that passed, and he clamored for her when she was absent. If any one mentioned the name of Wagner or Manet, he smiled. Madame

Sabatier came; so did the Manets. And with a fixed stare, as if peering through some invisible window opening upon eternity, he died, August 31, 1867, aged forty-six.

Barbey d'Aurevilly, himself a Satanist and dandy (oh, those comical old attitudes of literature!), had prophesied that the author of Fleurs du Mal would either blow out his brains or prostrate himself at the foot of the cross. (Later he said the same of Huysmans.) Baudelaire had the latter course forced upon him by fate after he had attempted spiritual suicide for how many years? (He once tried actual suicide, but the slight cut in his throat looked so ugly that he went no farther.) His soul had been a battle-field for the powers of good and evil. That at the end he brought the wreck of both soul and body to his God is not a subject of comment. He was an extraordinary poet with a bad conscience, who lived miserably and was buried with honors. Then it was that his worth was discovered (funeral orations over a genius are a species of public staircase wit). His reputation waxes with the years. He is an exotic gem in the crown of French poetry. Of him Swinburne has chanted Ave Atque Vale:

> Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
> Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?

VIII

THE REAL FLAUBERT

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you . . .

I

It was some time in the late spring or early summer of 1879. I was going through the Chaussée d'Antin when a huge man, a terrific old man, passed me. His long straggling gray hair hung low. His red face was that of a soldier or a sheik, and was divided by drooping white mustaches. A trumpet was his voice, and he gesticulated freely to the friend who accompanied him. I did not look at him with any particular interest until some one behind me—if he be dead now may he be eternally blest!—exclaimed: "C'est Flaubert!" Then I stared; for though I had not read Madame Bovary I adored the verbal music of Salammbô, secretly believing, however, that it had been written by Melchior, one of the three Wise Kings who journeyed under the beckoning star of Bethlehem—how else account for its planturous Asiatic prose, for its evocations of a vanished past? But I knew the name of Flaubert, that magic collocation of letters, and I gazed at him. He returned my glance from prominent eyeballs, the color of the pupil a bit of faded blue sky. He did not smile. He was too tender-hearted, despite his appreciation of the absurd. Besides, he knew. He, too, had been young and foolish. He, too, had worn a velvet coat and a comical cap, and had dreamed. I must have been a ridiculous spectacle. My hair was longer than my technic. I was studying Chopin or lunar rainbows then—I have forgotten which—and fancied that to be an artist one must dress like a cross between a

brigand and a studio model. But I was happy. Perhaps Flaubert knew this, for he resisted the temptation to smile. And then he passed from my view. To be frank, I was not very much impressed, because earlier in the day I had seen Paul de Cassagnac and that famous duellist was romantic-looking, which the old Colossus of Croisset was not. When I returned to the Batignolles I told the *concièrge* of my day's outing.

"Ah!" he remarked, "M. Flaubert! M. Paul de Cassagnac!—a great man, Monsieur P-paul!" He stuttered a little. Now I only remember "M. Flaubert," with his eyes like a bit of faded blue sky. Was it a dream? Was it Flaubert? Did some stranger cruelly deceive me? But I'll never relinquish the memory of my glorious mirage.

Where was he going, Gustave Flaubert, on that sunny afternoon? It was at the time when Jules Ferry appointed him an assistant-librarian at the Mazarine; *hors cadre,* a sinecure, a veiled pension with 3,000 francs a year; a charity, as the great writer bitterly complained. He was poor. He had given up, without a murmur, his entire fortune to his niece, then Madame Caroline Commainville, and through the influence of Turgenev and a few others this position had been created for him. He had no duties, yet he insisted on arriving at his post as early as half-past seven in the morning. He planned later that the government should be reimbursed for its outlay. His brother, Dr. Achille Flaubert, of Rouen, gave him a similar allowance, so the unhappy man had enough to live upon. Perhaps he was going to the Gare Saint-Lazare to take a train for Croisset; perhaps he was starting for Ancient Corinth—I thought—to see once more his Salammbô veiled by the sacred Zaïmph; or he might have been on the point of departing for Taprobana, the Ceylon of the antique world; that island whose very name he repeated with the same pleasure as did the old woman the blessed name of "Mesopotamia."

Taprobana! Taprobana! would cry Gustave Flaubert, to the despair of his friends. He was a man in love with beautiful sounds. He filled his books with them and with beautiful pictures. You must go to Beethoven or Liszt for a like variety in rhythms; the Flaubertian prose rhythms change in every sentence, like a landscape alternately swept by sunlight or shadowed by clouds. They vary with the moods and movements of the characters. They are music for ear and eye. And they can never be translated. He is poet, painter, and composer, and he is the most artistic of novelists. If his work is deficient in sentiment; if he fails to strike the chords of pity of Dostoïevsky, Turgenev, and Tolstoy; if he lacks the teeming variety of Balzac, he is superior to them all as an artist. Because of his stern theories of art, he renounced the facile victories of sentimentalism. He does not invite his readers to smile or weep with him. He is not a manipulator of marionettes. And he can compress in a page more than Balzac in a volume. In part he derives from Chateaubriand, Gautier, and Hugo, and he was a lover of Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Montaigne. His psychology is simple; he believed that character should express itself by action. His landscapes in the Dutch, "tight," miniature style, or the large, luminous, "loose" manner of Hobbema; or again full of the silver repose of Claude and the dark romantic beauty of Rousseau—witness the forest of Fontainebleau in Sentimental Education—are ravishing. He has painted interiors incomparably—this novel is filled with them: balls, café-life, political meetings, receptions, ladies in their drawing-rooms, Meissonier-like virtuosity in details or the bourgeois elegance of Alfred Stevens. As a portraitist Flaubert recalls Velasquez, Rembrandt, or Hals, and not a little of the *diablerie* to be found in the Flemish masters of grotesque. Emma Bovary is the most perfectly finished portrait in fiction and Frédéric Moreau is nearly as life-like—the eternal middle-class Young Man. Madame Arnoux,

chiefly rendered by marvellous evasions, is in the clear-obscure of Rembrandt. Homais stands alone, a subject the delineation of which Swift would have envied. And Rosannette Bron—the truest record of her class ever depicted, and during the same decade that saw the odious sentimental and false Camille. Or Salome in Hérodias, that vision, cruel, feline, exquisite, which lesser writers have sought vainly to imitate. (Gustave Moreau alone transposed her to paint—Moreau, too, was a cenobite of art.) Or Félicité in Trois Contes. Or the perpetual journalist, Hussonet, the swaggering politician, Regimbart, Pellerin, the dilettante painter, the socialist, Sénecal, and Arnoux, the immortal charlatan. Whatever subject Flaubert attacked, a masterpiece emerged. He left few books; each represents the pinnacle of its *genre:* Bovary, Salammbô, Sentimental Education, Hérodias, Bouvard and Pécuchet—this last-named an epitome of human stupidity. Not an original philosophic intellect, nevertheless a philosophy has been drawn from Flaubert's work by the brilliant French philosopher Jules Gaultier, who defines *Bovaryisme* as that tendency in mankind to appear other than it is; a tendency which is an important factor in our mental and social evolution. Without illusions mankind would take to the trees, the abode, we are told, of our prehistoric arboreal ancestors. Nevertheless, Emma Bovary as a philosophic symbol would have greatly astonished Gustave Flaubert.

II

"Since Goethe," might be a capital title for an essay on the epics that were written after the death of the noblest German of them all. The list would be small. In France there are only the rather barren rhetorical exercise of Edgar Quinet's Ahasvérus, the surging insurrectionary poems of Hugo, and the faultlessly frigid performance of Le-

Ma chère amie

Tout à l'heure en finissant, la 6me Mathilde
a dit que c'était trouvé de bien
à la Ire de Bovary que : Mme Pasca.
Puis on a parlé de vous ; et la 6ème s'est
étendue sur toutes vos perfections extérieures
figure, taille, et manières. Elle va vous dire
ce que je vous ai dédié. Bref, la 6ème vous
invite à venir lundi prochain
à 9 h 1/2. Je suis chargé de la communiquer
de faire part d'affront. - Vous me forcez
demander par un domestique, si j'irais présenter
mes vers à Mlle Mathilde. Mes charpentes
vendredi n'est-ce pas ?

Tout à vous, la plus chère de toutes
toutes

Gve Flaubert

Mardi 9e minuit 1 heure.

Fac-simile of an unpublished Flaubert letter.

conte de Lisle. But a work of such heroic power and proportions as Faust there is not, except Flaubert's Temptation of Saint Antony, which is so impregnated by the Faustian spirit—though poles apart from the German poem in its development—that, when we hear the youthful Gustave was a passionate admirer and student of Goethe, even addressing a long poem in alexandrines to his memory, we are not surprised. The real Flaubert is only beginning to be revealed. His four volumes of correspondence, his single volume of letters addressed to George Sand, and the recently published letters to his niece Caroline—now Madame Franklin Grout of Antibes—have shown us a very different Flaubert from the legend chiefly created by Maxime du Camp. Dr. Félix Dumesnil, in his remarkable study, has told us of the Rouen master's neurasthenia and has utterly disproved Du Camp's malicious yarns about epilepsy. Above all, Flaubert's devotion to Goethe and the recent publication of the first version of his Saint Antony have presented a novel picture of his personality. We now know that, striving to become impersonal in art, he is personal and present in every page he ever wrote; furthermore that, despite his incessant clamors and complaints, he, in reality, loved his galley-like, self-imposed labors.

The Temptation of Saint Antony is the only modern poem of epical largeness that may be classed with Brand or Zarathustra. It recalls at times the Second Part of Faust in its sweep and grandeur, in its grandiose visions; but though it is superior in verbal beauty it falls short of Goethe in its presentation of the problems of human will. Faust is a man who wills; Antony is static, not dynamic; the one is tempted by the Devil and succumbs, but does not lose his soul; Flaubert's hermit resists the Devil at his subtlest, yet we do not feel that his soul is as much worth the saving as Faust's. Ideas are the heroes in Flaubert's prose epic. Saint Antony is a metaphysical drama, not a

human one like Faust; nevertheless, to Faust alone may we compare it.

Flaubert was born at Rouen, December 12, 1821, where he died May 18, 1880. That he practically passed his years at Croisset, his mother's home, below Rouen facing the Seine, and in his study toiling like a titan over his books, should be recorded in every text-book of literature. For he is the patron-saint of all true literary men. He had a comfortable income. He thought, talked, lived literature. His friends Du Camp, Louis Bouilhet, Turgenev, Taine, Baudelaire, Zola, the Goncourts, Daudet, Renan, Maupassant, Henry James, have testified to his absorption in his art. It is almost touching in these times when a man goes into the writing business as if vending tripe, to recall the example of Flaubert for whom art was more sacred than religion. Naturally, he has been proved by the madhouse doctors to have been half cracked. Perhaps he was not as sane as a stockbroker, but it takes all sorts to make a world and a writer of Flaubert's rank should not be weighed in the same scales with, say, a successful politician.

He was endowed with a nervous temperament, though up to his twenty-second year he was as handsome and as free from sickness as a god. He was very tall and his eyes were sea-green. A nervous crisis supervened and at wide intervals returned. It was almost fatal for Gustave. He became pessimistic and afraid of life. However, the talk of his habitual truculent pessimism has been exaggerated. Naturally optimistic, with a powerful constitution and a stout heart, he worked like the Trojan he was. His pessimism came with the years during his boyhood—Byronic literary spleen was in the air. He was a grumbler and rather overdid the peevish pose. As Zola asked: "What if he had been forced to earn his living by writing?" But, even in his blackest moods, he was glad to see his friends at Croisset, glad to go up to Paris for recreation. His letters,

so free, fluent, explosive, give us the true Flaubert who childishly roared yet was so hearty, so friendly, so loving to his mother, niece, and intimates. His heredity was puzzling. His father was, like Baudelaire's grandfather, of Champenois stock; bourgeois, steady, a renowned surgeon. From him Gustave inherited his taste for all that pertained to medicine and science. Recall his escapades as a boy when he would peep for hours into the dissecting-room of the Rouen hospital. Such matters fascinated him. He knew more about the theory and practice of medicine than many professional men. An air of mortality exhales from his pages. He is in Madame Bovary the keen soul-surgeon. His love of a quiet, sober existence came to him from his father. He clung to one house for nearly a half century. He has said that one must live like a bourgeois and think like an artist; to be ascetic in life and violent in art—that was a Flaubert maxim. "I live only in my ideas," he wrote. But from the mother's side, a Norman and aristocrat she was, he inherited his love of art, his disdain for philistines, his adventurous disposition—transposed because of his malady to the cerebral region, to his imagination. He boasted Canadian blood, "red skin," he called it, but that was merely a mystification. The dissonance of temperament made itself felt early. He was the man of Goethe with two spirits struggling within him. Dual in temperament, he swung from an almost barbaric Romanticism to a cruel analysis of life that made him the pontiff of the Realistic school. He hated realism, yet an inner force set him to the disagreeable task of writing Madame Bovary and Sentimental Education—the latter, with its daylight atmosphere, the supreme exemplar of realism in fiction. So was it with his interior life. He was a mystic who no longer believed. These dislocations of his personality he combated all his life, and his books show with what success. "Flaubert," wrote Turgenev, his closest friend, to George Sand, "has tenacity

without energy, just as he has self-love without vanity." But what tenacity!

Touching on the question of epilepsy, a careful reading of Dumesnil convinces any one, but the neurologist with a fixed idea, that Flaubert was not a sufferer from genuine epilepsy. Not that there is any reason why epilepsy and genius should be divorced; we know in many cases the contrary is the reverse. Take the case of Dostoïevsky—his epilepsy was one of the most fruitful of motives in his stories. Nearly all his heroes and heroines are attainted. (Read The Idiot or the Karamsoff Brothers.) But Flaubert's epilepsy was arranged for him by Du Camp, who thought that by calling him an epilept in his untrustworthy Memoirs he would belittle Flaubert. And he did, for in his time the now celebrated—and discredited—theory of genius and its correlation with the falling-sickness had not been propounded. Flaubert had hystero-neurasthenia. He was rheumatic, asthmatic, predisposed to arterio-sclerosis and apoplexy. He died of an apoplectic stroke. His early nervous fits were without the *aura* of epilepsy; he did not froth at the mouth nor were there muscular contractions; not even at his death. Dr. Tourneaux, who hastened to aid him in the absence of his regular physician, Dr. Fortin, denied the rumors of epilepsy that were so gaily spread by that sublime old gossip, Edmond de Goncourt, also by Zola and Du Camp. The contraction of Flaubert's hands was caused by the rigidity of death; most conclusive of all evidence against the epileptic theory is the fact that during his occasional fits Gustave never lost consciousness. Nor did he suffer from any attacks before he had attained his majority, whereas epilepsy usually begins at an early age. He studied with intense zeal his malady and in a dozen letters refers to it, tickets its symptoms, tells of plans to escape the crises, and altogether, has furnished students of pathology many examples of nerve-exhaustion and its mitigation.

His first attacks began at Pont-Audemar, in 1843. In 1849 he had a fresh attack. His trip to the Orient relieved him. He was a Viking, a full-blooded man, who scorned sensible hygiene; he took no exercise beyond a walk in the morning, a walk in the evening on his terrace, and in summer an occasional swim in the Seine. He ate copiously, was moderate in drinking, smoked fifteen or twenty pipes a day, abused black coffee, and for months at a stretch worked fifteen hours out of the twenty-four at his desk. He warned his disciple, Guy de Maupassant, against too much boating as being destructive of mental productivity. After Nietzsche read this he wrote: "Sedentary application is the very sin against the Holy Ghost. Only thoughts won by walking are valuable." In 1870 another crisis was brought on by protracted labors over the revision of the definitive version of the Saint Antony. His travels in Normandy, in the East, his visits to London (1851) and to Righi-Kaltbad, together with sojourns in Paris—where he had a little apartment—make up the itinerary of his fifty-eight years. Is it any wonder that he died of apoplexy, stricken at his desk, he of a violently sanguine temperament, bull-necked, and the blood always in his face?

Maurice Spronck, who took too seriously the saying of Flaubert—a lover of extravagant paradox—thinks the writer had a cerebral lesion, which he called *audition colorée*. It is a malady peculiar to imaginative natures, which transposes tone to color, or odor to sound. As this "malady" may be found in poets from the dawn of creation, "colored audition" must be a necessary quality of art. Flaubert took pains to exaggerate his speech when in company with the Goncourts. He suspected their diary-keeping weakness and he humored it by telling fibs about his work. "I have finished my book, the cadence of the last paragraph has been found. Now I shall write it." Aghast were the brothers at the idea of an author beginning his book backward. Flau-

bert boasted that the color of Salammbô was purple. Sentimental Education (a bad title, as Turgenev wrote him; Withered Fruits, his first title, would have been better) was gray, and Madame Bovary was for him like the coloring of certain mouldy wood-vermin. The Goncourts solemnly swallowed all this, as did M. Spronck. Which moved Anatole France to exclaim: "Oh these young clinicians!"

But what is all this when compared with the magnificent idiocy of Du Camp, who asserted that if Flaubert had not suffered from epilepsy *he would have become a genius! Hénaurme!* as the man who made such masterpieces as Madame Bovary, Sentimental Education, Temptation of Saint Antony, the Three Tales, Bouvard et Pécuchet, had a comical habit of exclaiming. Enormous, too, was Guy de Maupassant's manner of avenging his master's memory. In the final edition—eight volumes long—Maupassant, with the unerring eye of hatred, affixed an introduction to Bouvard et Pécuchet. Therein he printed Maxime du Camp's letters to Flaubert during the period when Madame Bovary was appearing in the *Revue de Paris*. Du Camp was one of its editors. He urged Flaubert to cut the novel—the concision of which is so admirable, the organic quality of which is absolute. Worse still remains. If Flaubert couldn't perform the operation himself, then the aforesaid Du Camp would hire some experienced hack to do it for the sensitive author; wounded vanity Du Camp believed to be the cause of indignant remonstrances. They eliminated the scene of the agricultural fair and the operation on the hostler's foot—one scene as marvellous as a *genre* painting by Teniers with its study of the old farm servant, and psychologically more profound; the other necessary to the development of the story. Thus Madame Bovary was slaughtered serially by a man ignorant of art, that Madame Bovary which is one of the glories of French literature, as Mr. James truly says. Flaubert scribbled on Du Camp's

letters another of his favorite expletives, *Gigantesque!* Flaubert never forgave him, but they were apparently reconciled years later. Du Camp went into the Academy; Flaubert refused to consider a candidacy, though Victor Hugo—wittily nicknamed by Jules Laforgue "Aristides the Just"—urged him to do so. Even the mighty Balzac was too avid of glory and gold for Flaubert, to whom art and its consolations were all-sufficing.

III

Bouvard et Pécuchet was never finished. Its increasing demands killed Flaubert. In his desk were found many cahiers of notes taken to illustrate the fatuity of mankind, its stupidity, its *bêtise*. He was as pitiless as Swift or Schopenhauer in his contempt for low ideals and vulgar pretensions, for the very bourgeois from whom he sprung. In the collection we find this gem of wisdom uttered by Louis Napoleon in 1865: "The richness of a country depends on its general prosperity." To it should be included the Homais-like dictum of Maxime du Camp that if Flaubert had not been an epilept he would have been a genius! Or, the following hospital criticism; Flaubert was denied creative ability! Who has denied it to him? Homais alone in his supreme asininity should be a beacon-light of warning for any one of these inept critics. Flaubert once wrote: "I am reading books on hygiene; how comical they are! What impertinence these physicians have! What asses for the most part they are!" And he, the son of a celebrated surgeon and the brother of another, a medical student himself, might have made Homais a psychiatrist instead of a druggist, if he had lived longer.

Du Camp—who, clever and witty as well as inexact and reckless in statement, was a man given to envies and literary jealousies—never got over Flaubert's startling suc-

cess with Madame Bovary. He once wrote a fanciful epitaph for Louise Colet, a French woman of mediocrity, the "Muse" of Flaubert, a general trouble-breeder and a recipient of Flaubert's correspondence. The Colet had embroiled herself with De Musset and published a spiteful romance in which poor Flaubert was the villain. This the Du Camp inscription: "Here lies the woman who compromised Victor Cousin, made Alfred de Musset ridiculous, calumniated Gustave Flaubert, and tried to assassinate Alphonse Karr: *Requiescat in pace.*" A like epitaph suggests itself for Maxime du Camp: *Hic jacet* the man who slandered Baudelaire, traduced his loving friend Gustave Flaubert, and was snuffed out of critical existence by Guy de Maupassant.

The massive-shouldered Hercules, Flaubert, a Hercules spinning prose for his exacting Dejanira of art, was called unintellgent by Anatole France. He had not, it is true, the subtle critical brain and thorough scholarship of M. France; yet Flaubert was learned. Brunetière even taxed him with an excess of erudition. But his multitudinous conversation, his lack of logic, his rather gross sense of humor, are not to be found in his work. Without that work, without Salammbô, for example, should we have had the pleasure, thrice-distilled, of reading Anatole France's Thaïs? (See a single instance in the definitive edition Temptation, page 115, the episode of the Gymnosophist.) All revivals of the antique world are unsatisfactory at best, whether Chateaubriand's Martyrs, or the unsubstantial lath and plaster of Bulwer's Last Days of Pompeii, or the flabbiness and fustian of Quo Vadis. The most perfect attempt is Salammbô, an opera in words, and its battlements of purple prose were riddled by Sainte-Beuve, by Froehner, and lately by Maurice Pézard—who has proved to his own satisfaction that Flaubert was sadly amiss in his Punic archæology. Well, who cares if he was incorrect in details? His partially suc-

cessful reconstruction of an epoch is admitted, though the human element is somewhat obliterated. Flaubert was bound to be more Carthaginian than Carthage.

After the scandal caused by the prosecution of Madame Bovary Flaubert was afraid to publish his 1856, second version of Saint Antony. He had been advised by the sapient Du Camp to cast the manuscript into the fire, after a reading before Bouilhet and Du Camp lasting thirty-three hours. He refused. This was in September, 1849. Du Camp declares that he asked him to essay "the Delaunay affair," meaning the Delamarre story. This Flaubert did, and the result was the priceless history of Charles and Emma Bovary. D'Aurevilly attacked the book viciously; Baudelaire defended it. Later Turgenev wrote to Flaubert: "After all you are Flaubert!" George Sand was a motherly consoler. Their letters are delightful. She did not quite understand the bluff, naïve Gustave, she who composed so flowingly, and could turn on or off her prose like the tap of a kitchen hydrant (the simile is her own). How could she fathom the tormented desire of her friend for perfection, for the blending of idea and image, for the eternal pursuit of the right word, the shapely sentence, the cadenced *coda* of a paragraph? And of the larger demands of style, of the subtle tone of a page, a chapter, a book, why should this fluent and graceful writer, called George Sand, concern herself with such superfluities! It was always *O altitudo* in art with Flaubert—the most copious, careless of correspondents. He had set for himself an impossible standard of perfection and an ideal of impersonality neither of which he realized. But there is no outward sign of conflict in his work; all trace of the labor bestowed upon his paragraphs is absent. His style is simple, direct, large, above all, clear, the clarity of classic prose.

His declaiming aloud his sentences has been adduced to prove his absence of sanity. Beethoven, too, was pro-

nounced crazy by his various landladies because he sang and howled in his voice of a composer his compositions in the making. Flaubert was the possessor of an accurate musical ear; not without justice did Coppée call him the "Beethoven of French prose." His sense of rhythm was acute; he carried it so far that he would sacrifice grammar to rhythmic flow. He tested his sentences aloud. Once in his apartment, Rue Murillo, overlooking Parc Monceau, he rehearsed a page of a new book for hours. Belated coachmen, noting the open windows, hearing an outrageous vocal noise, concluded that a musical *soirée* was in progress. Gradually the street filled on either side with carriages in search of passengers. But the guests never emerged from the house. In the early morning the lights were extinguished and the oaths of the disappointed ones must have been heard by Flaubert.

He would annotate three hundred volumes for a page of facts. His bump of scrupulousness was large. In twenty pages he sometimes saved three or four from destruction. He did not become, however, as captious as Balzac in the handling of proofs. A martyr of style, he was not altogether an enameller in precious stones, not a patient mosaic-maker, superimposing here and there a precious verbal jewel. First, the image, and then its appropriate garb; sometimes image and phrase were born simultaneously, as was the case with Richard Wagner. These extraordinary things may happen to men of genius, who are neither opium-eaters nor lunatics. The idea that Flaubert was ever addicted to drugs—beyond the quinine with which his good father dosed him after the fashion of those days—is ridiculous. The gorgeous visions of Saint Antony are the results of stupendous preparatory studies, a stupendous power of fantasy, and a stupendous concentration. Opium superinduces visions, but not the power and faculty of attention to record them in terms of literature for forty years.

George Saintsbury has pronounced Saint Antony the most perfect specimen of dream literature extant. And because of its precision in details, its architectonic, its deep-hued waking hallucinations.

Flaubert was a very nervous man, "as hysterical as an old woman," said Dr. Hardy of the hospital Saint-Louis, but neither mad nor epileptic. His mental development was not arrested in his youth, as asserted by Du Camp; he had arranged his life from the time he decided to become a writer. He was one with the exotic painter, Gustave Moreau, in his abhorrence of the mob. He was a poet who wrote a perfect prose, not prose-poetry. Enamored of the antique, of the Orient, of mystical subjects, he spent a lifetime in the elaboration of his beloved themes. That he was obsessed by them is merely to say that he was the possessor of mental energy and artistic gifts. He was not happy. He never brought his interior and exterior lives into complete harmony. An unparalleled observer, an imaginative genius, he was a child outside the realm of art. Soft of heart, he raised his niece as a daughter; a loving son, he would console himself after his mother's death by looking at the dresses she once wore. Flaubert a sentimentalist! He outlived his family and his friends, save a few; death was never far away from his thoughts; he would weep over his souvenirs. At Croisset I have talked with the faithful Colange, whose card reads: "E. Colange, ex-cook of Gustave Flaubert!" The affection of the novelist for cats and dogs, he told me, was marked. The study pavilion is to-day a Flaubert Memorial. The parent house is gone, and in 1901 there was a distillery on the grounds, which is now a printing establishment. Flaubert cherished the notion that Pascal had once stopped in the old Croisset homestead; that Abbé Prévost had written Manon Lescaut within its walls. He had many such old-fashioned and darling *tics*, and he is to be envied them.

Since Madame Bovary French fiction, for the most part, has been Flaubert with variations. His influence is still incalculable. François Coppée wrote: "By the extent and the magnificence of his prose, Gustave Flaubert equals Bossuet and Chateaubriand. He is destined to become a great classic. And several centuries hence—everything perishes—when the French language shall have become only a dead language, candidates for the bachelor's degree will be able to obtain it only by expounding (along with the famous exordium, He Who Reigns in the Heavens, etc., or The Departure of the Swallows, of René) the portrait of Catharine le Roux, the farm servant, in Madame Bovary, or the episode of the Crucified Lions in Salammbô."

IV

With the critical taste that uncovers bare the bones of the dead I have no concern, nor shall I enter the way which would lead me into the dusty region of professional ethics. Every portrait painter from Titian to John Sargent, from Velasquez to Zuloaga, has had a model. Novelists are no less honest when they build their characters upon human beings they have known and studied, whether their name be Fielding or Balzac or Flaubert.

The curiosity which seeks to unveil the anonymity of a novelist's personages may not be exactly laudable; it is yet excusable. I am reminded of its existence by a certain Parisian journalist who, acting upon information that appeared in the pages of a well-known French literary review, went to Normandy in search of the real Emma Bovary. Once called wicked, the novel has been pronounced as moral as a Sunday-school tract. Thackeray admired its style, but deplored, with his accustomed streak of sentimentalism, the cold-blooded analysis which hunted Emma to an ignominious grave. Yet the author of Vanity Fair did not hesitate

to pursue through many chapters his mercurial Rebecca Sharp.

The story of Emma Bovary would hardly attract, if published in the daily news columns, much attention nowadays. A good-looking young provincial woman tires of her honest, slow-going husband. She reads silly novels, as do thousands of silly married girls to-day. Emma lived in a little town not far from Rouen. Flaubert named it Yonville. We read that Emma flirted with a country squire who in order to escape eloping with the romantic goose suddenly disappeared. She consoled herself with a young law student, but when he tired of her the consequences were lamentable. Harassed by debt, Emma took poison. Her stupid husband, a hard-working district doctor, was aghast at her death and puzzled by the ruin which followed fast at its heels. He found it all out, even the love-letters of the squire. He died suddenly.

A sordid tale, but perfectly told and remarkable not only for the fidelity of the landscapes, the chaste restraint of the style, but also because there are half a dozen marvellously executed characters, several of which have entered into the living current of French speech. Homais, the vainglorious, yet human and likable Homais, is a synonym for pedantic bragging mediocrity. He is a druggist. He would have made an ideal politician. He stands for a shallow "modernity" but is more superstitious than a mediæval sexton. Flaubert's novel left an indelible mark in French fiction and philosophy. Even Balzac did not create a Homais.

Now comes the curious part of the story. It was the transcription of a real occurrence. Flaubert did not invent it. In a town near Rouen named Ry there was once a young physician, Louis Delamarre. He originally hailed from Catenay, where his father practised medicine. In the novel Ry is called Yonville. Delamarre paid his addresses to Delphine Couturier, who in 1843 was twenty-three years

of age. She was comely, had a bright though superficial mind, spoke in a pretentious manner, and overdressed. From her father she inherited her vanity and the desire to appear as occupying a more exalted position than she did. The elder Couturier owned a farm, though heavily mortgaged, at Vieux-Château. He was a close-fisted Norman anxious to marry off his daughters—Emma had a sister. He objected to the advances of the youthful physician, chiefly because he saw no great match for his girl. Herein the tale diverges from life.

But love laughs at farmers as well as locksmiths, and by a ruse worthy of Paul de Kock, Delphine, by feigning maternity, got the parental permission. She soon regretted her marriage. The husband, Louis, was prosaic. He earned the daily bread and butter of the household, and even economized so that his pretty wife could buy fallals and foolish books. She hired a servant and had her day at home—Fridays. No one visited her. She was only an unimportant spouse of a poverty-stricken country doctor. At Saint-Germain des Essours there still lives an octogenarian peasant woman once the domestic of the Delamarres-Bovarys. She said, when asked to describe her mistress: "Heavens, but she was pretty. Face, figure, hair, all were beautiful."

In Ry there was a druggist named Jouanne. He is the original Homais. Delphine's, or rather Emma Bovary's, first admirer was a law clerk, Louis Bottet. He is described as a small, impatient, alert old man at the time of his death. The faithless Rodolphe—what a name for sentimental melodrama—was really a proprietor named Campion. He lost his farm and revenue after Emma's death and went to America to make his fortune. Unsuccessful, he returned to Paris, and about 1852 shot himself on the boulevard. Who may deny, after this, that truth is stranger than Flaubert's fiction?

The good, sensible old Abbé Bournisien, who advised

Emma Bovary, when she came to him for spiritual consolation, to consult her doctor husband, was, in reality, an Abbé Lafortune. The irony of events is set forth in sinister relief by the epitaph which the real Emma's husband had carved on her tomb: "She was a good mother, a good wife." Gossips of Ry aver that after the truth came to Dr. Delamarre he took a slow poison. But this seems turning the screw a trifle too far. Mme. Delamarre, or Emma Bovary, was buried in the graveyard of the only church at Ry. To-day the tomb is no longer in existence. She died March 6, 1848. The inhabitants still show the church,—the porch of which was too narrow to allow the passage of unlucky Emma's coffin—the house of her husband, and the apothecary shop of M. Homais. The latter survived for many years the unhappy heroine, who stole the poison that killed her from his stock. A delightful touch of Homais-like humor was displayed—one that exonerated Flaubert from the charge of exaggeration in portraying Homais—when the novel appeared. The characters were at once recognized, both in Rouen and Ry. This druggist, Jouanne-Homais, was flattered at the lengthy study of himself, of course missing its relentless ironic strokes. He regretted openly that the author had not consulted him; for, said he, "I could have given him many points about which he knew nothing." The epitaph which the real Homais composed for the tomb of his wife—surely you can never forget her after reading the novel—is magnificent in its bombast. Flaubert knew his man.

The distinguished writer is a sober narrator of facts. His is not a domain of delicate thrills. His women are neither doves nor devils. He does not paint those acrobats of the soul so dear to psychological fiction. Despite his pretended impassibility, he is tender-hearted; the pity he felt for his characters is not effusively expressed. But the larger rhythms of humanity are ever present. If he had been hard

of heart, he would have related the Bovary tale as it happened in life. Charles Bovary finds the love-letters and meets Rodolphe. Nothing happens. The real Charles never knew of the real Emma's treachery. Madame d'Epinay was not far amiss when she wrote: "The profession of woman is very hard."

V

No less a masterpiece than Don Quixote has been cited in critical comparison with Madame Bovary. Flaubert was called the Cervantes who had ridiculed from the field the Romantic School. This irritated him, for he never posed as a realist; indeed, he confessed that he had intended to mock the Realistic School—then headed by Champfleury—in his Bovary. The very name of this book would arouse a storm of abuse from him. He knew that he had more than one book in him, he believed better books; the indifference of the public to Sentimental Education and the Temptation he never understood. Much astonishment was expressed, after the appearance of Bovary, that such a mature work of art should have been the author's first. But Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms did not permit their juvenile efforts to see the light; the same was the case with Flaubert. In 1835—he was fourteen at the time—he wrote Mort du Duc de Guise; in 1836 another historical study. Short stories in the style of Hoffmann, with thrilling titles, such as Rage et Impuissance, Le Rêve d'Enfer (1837), and a psychologic effort, Agonies (dedicated to Alfred le Poittevin—as are both versions of the Temptation; Alfred's sister later became the mother of Guy de Maupassant): all these exercises, as is a Dance of Death, are still in manuscript. But in 1839 a scenario of a mystery bearing the cryptic title of Smarh was written; and this with Novembre, and a study of Rabelais, and Nuit de Don Juan, have been published in the definitive edition; with a record of travels

in Normandy. The Memoirs of a Madman appeared a few years ago in a Parisian magazine. It was a youthful effort. There is also in the collection of Madame Grout a 300-page manuscript (1843–1845) named L'Education Sentimentale —vaguely inspired by Wilhelm Meister—which has nothing in common with his novel of the same name published in 1869.

Flaubert's taste in the matter of titles was lamentable. He made a scenario for a tale called Spiral, and he often asserted that he hankered to write in marmoreal prose the Combat of Thermopylæ; he meditated, too, a novel the scene and characters laid in the Second Empire, and dilated upon the beauty of a portrait executed in microscopic detail of that immortal character, M. le Préfet. We might have had a second Homais if he had made this project a reality. He told Turgenev that he had another idea, a sort of modern Matron of Ephesus—in the Temptation there is an episode that suggests the Ephesus. He did not lack invention and he was an extremely rapid writer—but his artistic conscience was morbidly sensitive. It pained him to see Zola throwing his better self to the dogs in his noisy, inartistic novels—in which, he said, was neither poetry nor art. And he wrote this opinion to Zola, who promptly called him an idiot. In that correct but colorless book of Faguet's on Flaubert, the critic makes note of all the novelist's grammatical errors and reaches the conclusion that he was a stylist unique, but not careful in his grammar. Now, while this is piffling pedantry, the facts are in Faguet's favor; Faguet, who holds the critical scales nicely, as he always does, though listlessly. But in the handling of such a robust, red-blooded subject as Flaubert the college professor was hardly a wise selection. The Faguet study is clear and painstaking but not sympathetic. Mr. James has praised it, possibly because Faguet agrees with him as to the psychology of Sentimental Education. Not a study, Faguet's,

for Flaubertians, who see the faults of their Saint Polycarp—his favorite self-appellation—and love him for his all-too-human imperfections.

In 1845 Flaubert, on a visit to Italy, stopped at Genoa. There, in the Palace Balbi-Senarega—and not at the Doria, as Du Camp wrote, with his accustomed carelessness—the young Frenchman saw an old picture by Breughel (probably by Pieter the Younger, surnamed Hell-Breughel) that represents a temptation of Saint Antony. It is hardly a masterpiece, this Breughel, and is dingy in color. But Flaubert, who loved the grotesque, procured an engraving of this picture and it hung in his study at Croisset until the day of his death. It was the springboard of his own Temptation. The germ may be found in his mystery, Smarh, with its Demon and metaphysical coloring. Breughel set into motion the mental machinery of the Temptation that never stopped whirring until 1874. The first *brouillon* of the Temptation was begun May 24, 1848, and finished September 12, 1849. It numbered 540 pages of manuscript. Set aside for Bovary, Flaubert took up the draft again and made the second version in 1856. When he had done with it, the manuscript was reduced to 193 pages. Not satisfied, he returned to the work in 1872, and when ready for publication in 1874 the number of pages were 136. He even then cut, from ten chapters, three. Last year the French world read the second version of 1856 and was astonished to find it so different from the definitive one of 1874. The critical sobriety and courage of Flaubert were vindicated. In 1849, reading to Bouilhet and Du Camp, he had been advised to burn the stuff; instead he boiled it down for the 1856 version. To Turgenev he had submitted the 1872 draft, and thus it came that this wonderful colored-panorama of philosophy, this Gulliver-like travelling amid the master ideas of the antique and the early Christian worlds, was published.

All the youthful romantic Flaubert—the "spouter" of blazing phrases, the lover of jewelled words, of monstrous and picturesque ideas and situations—is in the first turbulent version of the Temptation. In the later version he is more critical and historical. Flaubert had grown intellectually as his emotions had cooled with the years. The first Temptation is romantic and religious; the 1874 version cooler and more sceptical. Dramatic, arranged more theatrically than the first, the author's affection for mysticism, the East, and the classic world shows more in this version. Psychologic gradations of character and events are clearer in the second version. I cannot agree with Louis Bertrand, who edited the 1856 version, that it is superior in interest to the 1874 version. It is a novelty, but Flaubert was never so much the surgeon as when he operated upon his own manuscript. He often hesitated, he always suffered, and he never flinched when his mind was finally satisfied. Faguet calls the Temptation an abstract pessimistic novel. He also complains that the philosophic ideas are not novel; a new philosophy would be a veritable phœnix. Why should they be? Flaubert does not enunciate a new philosophy. He is the artist who shows us apocalyptic visions of all philosophies, all schools, ethical systems, cultures, religions. The gods from every land defile by and are each in turn swept away by the relentless Button-Moulder, Oblivion. There was a talking and amusing pig in the first version; he is not present in the second—possibly because Flaubert discovered that it was not Saint Antony of Egypt, but Saint Antony of Padua, who had a pig. (Rops has remembered the animal in his etching of Flaubert's Antony.) The Antony of 1856 has a more modern soul; the second reveals the determinism of Flaubert. He is phlegmatic, almost stupid, a supine Faust incapable of self-irony. Everything revolves about him—the multi-colored splendors of Alexandria, of the Queen of Sheba; Satan, Death and Luxury,

Hilarion, Simon Magus and Apollonius of Tyana tempt him; upon his ears fall the enchanting phrases of the eternal dialogue between Sphinx and Chimera—we dream of the Songs of Solomon when reading: "Je cherche des parfums nouveaux, des fleurs plus larges, des plaisirs inéprouvés"; the speech of the Chimera. Flaubert knew the Old Testament rhythms and beauty of phrase; witness this speech of Death's: "et on fait la guerre avec de la musique, des panaches, des drapeaux, des harnais d'or . . ." You seem to overhear the golden trumpets of Bayreuth.

The demon retires baffled at the end of the first version. He is diabolic and not a little theatrical. The Devil of 1874 is more artful. He shows Antony the Cosmos, but he is not the victor in the duel. The new Antony studies the protean forms of life and at the end is ravished by the sight of protoplasm. "O bliss!" he cries, and longs to be transformed into every species of energy, "to be matter." Then the dawn comes up like the uplifted curtains of a tabernacle —Flaubert's image—and in the very disc of the sun shines the face of Jesus Christ. "Antony makes the sign of the cross and resumes his prayers." Thus ends the 1874 edition, ends a book of irony, dreams, and sumptuous landscapes. A sense of the nothingness of human thought, human endeavor, assails the reader, for he has traversed all the metaphysical and religious ideas of the ages, has viewed all the gods, idols, demigods, ghosts, heresies, and heresiarchs; Jupiter on his throne and the early warring Christian sects vanish into smoke, crumble into the gulf of *Néant*. A vivid episode was omitted in the definitive version. At the close of the gods' procession the Saviour appears. He is old, white-haired, and weary from the burden of the cross and the sins of mankind. Some mock him; He is reproached by kings for propounding the equality of the poor; but by the majority He is unrecognized; and, spurned, the Son of Man falls into the dust of life. A poign-

ant page, the spirit of which may be recognized in some latter-day French pictures and in the eloquent phrases of Jehan Rictus. M. Bertrand has pointed out that the 1849 version of the Temptation contains color and imagery similar to the Légendes des Siècles, though written ten years before Hugo's poem. The Temptation of Saint Antony was neither a popular nor a critical success in 1874. France realizes that in Flaubert's prose epic she has a masterpiece of intellectual power, profound irony, and unsurpassed beauty. The reader is alternately reminded of the Apocalypse, of Dante's grim visions, and of the second Faust.

Almost numberless are the studies of Flaubert's method in composing his books. A small library could be filled by books about his style. We have seen the reproductions of the various drafts that he made in the description of Emma Bovary's visit to Rouen. Armand Weil, with a patience that is itself Flaubertian, has shown us the variations in the manuscript of Salammbô (see, *Revue Universitaire,* April 15, 1902). Yet, compared with Balzac's spider-haunted, scribbled-overproofs, Flaubert's seem virginal of corrections. The one reproduced here is from two pages of original manuscript that I was lucky enough to secure at Paris in 1903. They contain instructions to the printer, as may be seen, and demonstrate Flaubert's sharp eye; in every instance his changes are an improvement. One of the arguments in favor of the last version of the Temptation is its shrinkage in bulk from the 1856 manuscript. The letter, hitherto unpublished—for it will not be found in the six volumes of the Correspondence—is possibly addressed to his niece, Caroline Hamard. Unusual for Flaubert is the absence of any date; he was scrupulous in giving hour, day, month, and year, in his letters. The princess referred to is the Princess Mathilde Bonaparte-Demidoff, the patron of

artists and literary men, an admirer of Flaubert's. He often dined with her at Saint-Gratien. Madame Pasca the actress was also a friend and visited Croisset when he fractured his leg. He had a genius for friendships with both women and men. His mother, often telling him that his devotion to style had dried up his natural affections, admitted that he had a bigger heart than head. And, after all, this motherly estimate gives us the measure of the real Flaubert.

IX

ANATOLE FRANCE

I

In the first part of that great, human Book, dear to all good Pantagruelists, is this picture: "From the Tower Anatole to the Messembrine were faire spacious galleries, all colored over and painted with the ancient prowesses, histories and descriptions of the world." The Tower Anatole is part of the architecture of the Abbey of Thélème, in common with the other towers named, Artick, Calaer, Hesperia, and Caiere.

For lovers of the exquisite and whimsical artist, Anatole France, a comparison with Rabelais may not appear strained. Anatole, the man, has written much that contains, as did the gracious Tower Anatole, "faire spacious galleries . . . painted with ancient . . . histories." He has in his veins some infusion of the literary blood of that "bon gros libertin," Rabelais, a figure in French literature who refuses to be budged from his commanding position, notwithstanding the combined prestige of Pascal, Voltaire, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Hugo, and Balzac. And the gentle Anatole has a pinch of Rabelais's *esprit gaulois,* which may be found in both Balzac and Maupassant.

To call France a sceptic is to state a commonplace. But he is so many other things that he bewilders. The spiritual stepson of Renan, a partial inheritor of his gifts of irony and pity, and a continuator of the elder master's diverse and undulating style, France displays affinities with Heine, Aristophanes, Charles Lamb, Epicurus, Sterne, and Voltaire. The "glue of unanimity"—to use an expression of the old pedantic Budæus—has united the widely disparate qualities of his personality. His outlook upon life is the

outlook of Anatole France. His vast learning is worn with an air almost mocking. After the bricks and mortar of the realists, after the lyric pessimism of the morally and politically disillusioned generation following the Franco-German war, his genius comes in the nature of a consoling apparition. Like his own Dr. Trublet, in Histoire Comique, he can say: "*Je tiens boutique de mensonges. Je soulage, je console. Peut-il consoler et soulager sans mentir?*" And he does deceive us with the resources of his art, with the waving of his lithe wand which transforms whales into weasels, mosques into cathedrals.

Perhaps too much stress has been set upon his irony. Ironic he is with a sinuosity that yields only to Renan. It is irony rather in the shape of the idea, than in its presentation; atmospheric is it rather than surface antithesis, or the witty inversion of a moral order; he is a man of sentiment, Shandean sentiment as it is at times. But the note we always hear, if distantly reverberant, is the note of pity. To be all irony is to mask one's humanity; and to accuse Anatole France of the lack of humanity is to convict oneself of critical color-blindness. His writings abound in sympathetic overtones. His pity is without Olympian condescension. He is a most lovable man in the presence of the eternal spectacle of human stupidity and guile. It is not alone that he pardons, but also that he seeks to comprehend. Not emulating the cold surgeon's eye of a Flaubert, it is with the kindly vision of a priest he studies the maladies of our soul. In him there is an ecclesiastical *fond*. He forgives because he understands. And after his tenderest benediction he sometimes smiles; it may be a smile of irony; yet it is seldom cruel. He is an adroit determinist, yet sets no store by the logical faculties. Man is not a reasoning animal, he says, and human reason is often a mirage.

But to label him with sentimentalism *à la russe*—the Russian pity that stems from Dickens—would shock him into

an outburst. Conceive him, then, as a man to whom all emotional extravagance is foreign; as a detester of rhetoric, of declamation, of the phrase facile; as a thinker who assembles within the temple of his creations every extreme in thought, manners, sentiment, and belief, yet contrive to fuse this chaos by the force of his sober style. His is a style more linear than colored, more for the eye than the ear; a style so pellucid that one views it suspiciously—it may conceal in its clear, profound depths strange secrets, as does some mountain lake in the shine of the sun. Even the simplest art may have its veils.

In the matter of clarity, Anatole France is the equal of Renan and John Henry Newman, and if this same clarity at one time was a conventional quality of French prose, it is rarer in these days. Never syncopated, moving at a moderate *tempo,* smooth in his transitions, replete with sensitive rejections, crystalline in his diction, a lover and a master of large luminous words, limpid and delicate and felicitous, the very marrow of the man is in his unique style. Few writers swim so easily under such a heavy burden of erudition. A loving student of books, his knowledge is precise, his range wide in many literatures. He is a true humanist. He loves learning for itself, loves words, treasures them, fondles them, burnishes them anew to their old meanings—though he has never tarried in the half-way house of epigram. But, over all, his love of humanity sheds a steady glow. Without marked dramatic sense, he nevertheless surprises mankind at its minute daily acts. And these he renders for us as candidly "as snow in the sunshine"; as the old Dutch painters stir our nerves by a simple shaft of light passing through a half-open door, upon an old woman polishing her spectacles. M. France sees and notes many gestures, inutile or tragic, notes them with the enthralling simplicity of a complicated artist. He deals with ideas so vitally that they become human; yet his characters are never

abstractions, nor serve as pallid allegories; they are all alive, from Sylvestre Bonnard to the group that meets to chat in the Foro Romano of Sur la Pierre Blanche. He can depict a cat or a dog with fidelity; his dog Riquet bids fair to live in French literature. He is an interpreter of life, not after the manner of the novelist, but of life viewed through the temperament of a tolerant poet and philosopher.

This modern thinker, who has shed the despotism of the positivist dogma, boasts the soul of a chameleon. He understands, he loves, Christianity with a knowledge and a fervor that surprise until one measures the depth of his affection for the antique world. To further confuse our perceptions, he exhibits a sympathy for Hebraic lore that can only be set down to a remote lineage. He has rifled the Talmud for its forgotten stories; he delights in juxtaposing the cultured Greek and the strenuous Paul; he adores the contrast of Mary Magdalen with the pampered Roman matron. Add to this a familiarity with the proceeds of latter-day science, astronomy in particular, with the scholastic speculation of the Renaissance, mediæval piety, and the Pyrrhonism of a boulevard philosopher. So commingled are these contradictory elements, so many angles are there exposed to numerous cultures, so many surfaces avid of impressions, that we end in admiring the exercise of a magic which blends into a happy synthesis such a variety of moral dissonances, such moral preciosity. It is magic—though there are moments when we regard the operation as intellectual legerdemain of a superior kind. We suspect dupery. But the humor of France is not the least of his miraculous solvents; it is his humor that often transforms a doubtful campaign into a radiant victory. We see him, the protagonist of his own psychical drama, dancing on a tight rope in the airiest manner, capering deliciously in the void, and quite like a prestidigitator bidding us doubt the existence of his rope.

His life long, Renan, despite his famous phrase, "the mania of certitude," was pursued by the idea of an absolute. He cried for proofs. To Berthelot he wrote: "I am eager for mathematics." It promised finality. As he aged, he was contented to seek an atmosphere of moral feeling; though he declared that "the real is a vast outrage on the ideal." He tremulously participated in the ritual of social life, and in the worship of the unknown god. He at last felt that Nature abhorred an absolute; that Being was ever a Becoming; that religion and philosophy are the result of a partial misunderstanding. All is relative, and the soul of man must ever feed upon chimeras! The Breton harp of Renan became sadly unstrung amid the shallow thunders of agnostic Paris.

But France, his eyes quite open and smiling, gayly Pagan Anatole, does not demand proofs. He rejoices in a philosophic indifference, he has the gift of paradox. To Renan's plea for the rigid realities of mathematics, he might ask, with Ibsen, whether two and two do not make five on the planet Jupiter! To Montaigne's "What Know I?" he opposes Rabelais's "Do What Thou Wilt!" And then he adorns the wheel of Ixion with garlands.

He believes in the belief of God. He swears by the gods of all times and climes. His is the cosmical soul. A man who unites in his tales something of the Mimes of Herondas, La Bruyère's Characters, and the Lucian Dialogues, with faint flavors of Racine and La Fontaine, may be pardoned his polygraphic faiths. With Baudelaire he knows the tremors of the believing atheist; with Baudelaire he would restrain any show of irreverence before an idol, be it wooden or bronze. It might be the unknown god!—as Baudelaire once cried.

This pleasing chromatism in beliefs, a belief in all and none, is not a new phenomenon. The classical world of thought has several matches for Anatole France, from the

followers of Aristippus to the Sophists. But there is a specific note of individuality, a *roulade* quite Anatolian in the Frenchman's writings. No one but this accomplished Parisian sceptic could have framed The Opinions of Jerome Coignard and his wholly delightful scheme for a Bureau of Vanity; "man is an animal with a musket," he declares; Sylvestre Bonnard and M. Bergeret are new with a dynamic novelty.

As Walter Pater was accused of a silky dilettanteism, so France, as much a Cyrenaic as the English writer, was nevertheless forced to step down from his ivory tower to the dusty streets and there demonstrate his sincerity by battling for his convictions. After the imbecile Dreyfus affair had rolled away, there was little talk in Paris of Anatole France, Epicurean. He was saluted with every variety of abuse, but this amateur of fine sensations had forever settled the charge of morose aloofness, of voluptuous cynicism. (Though to-day he is regarded with a certain suspicion by all camps.) At a similar point where the endurance of Ernest Renan had failed him, Anatole France proved his own faith. Renan during the black days of the Commune retired to Versailles, there to meditate upon the shamelessness of the brute, Caliban, his lowest instincts unleashed. But France believes in the people, he has said that the future belongs to Caliban, and he would scout his master's conception of the Tyrant-Sage, a conception that Nietzsche partially transposed later to the ecstatic key of the Superman. M. France would probably advocate the head-chopping of such wise monster-despots. An aristocrat by culture and fastidiousness, he is without an *arrière-pensée* of the snobbery of the intellect, of the cerebral exaltation displayed by Hugo, Baudelaire, and the Goncourts.

When France published his early verse—his début was as a poet and Parnassian poet—Catulle Mendès divined the man. He wrote, "I can never think of Anatole France . . .

without fancying I see a young Alexandrian poet of the second century, a Christian, doubtless, who is more than half Jew, above all a neoplatonist, and further a pure theist deeply imbued with the teachings of Basilides and Valentinus, and the Perfumes of the Orphic poems of some recent rhetorician, in whom subtlety was pushed to mysticism and philosophy to the threshold of the Kabbalah."

Some critics have accused him of not being able to build a book. He knows the rhythms of poems, but he "does not know" the harmony of essences, said the late Bernard Lazare; he is an excellent Parnassian but a mediocre philosopher: he is a charming *raconteur*, but he cannot compose a book. Precise in details, diffuse in ensembles, clear and confused, neat and ambiguous, continued M. Lazare, he searches his object in concentric circles. Furthermore, he has the soul of a Greek in the decadence, and the voice of a Sistine Chapel singer—pure and irresolute. To all this admission may be made without fear of decomposing the picture which France has set up before us of his own personality—a picture, however, he does not himself hesitate to efface from the canvas whenever his perversity prompts. He is all that his critic asserts and much more. It is this moral eclecticism, this jumble of opposites, this violent contrast of traits, and these apparently irreconcilable elements of his character, which appal, interest, yet make him so human. But his art never swerves; it records invariably the fluctuations of his spirit, a spirit at once desultory, savant, and subtle, records all in a style, concrete and clairvoyant.

His books are not so much novels as chronicles of designedly simple structure; his essays are confessions; his confessions, a blending of the naïve and the corrupt, for there are corroding properties in these novel persuasive disenchantments. Upon the robust of faith Anatole France makes no more impression than do Augustine, Saint Teresa, the Imitation of Christ, or the Provincial Letters. Such

nuances of scepticism as his are for those who love the comedies of belief and disbelief. Not possessing the Huysmans intensity of temperament, France will never be betrayed into such affirmations; Huysmans, who dropped like a ripe plum into the basket of the ecclesiastical fruit-gatherer. France will never lose his balance in the fumes of a personal conversion. Of Plato himself he would ask: "What is Truth?" and if Pilate posed the same question, France would reply by handing him his Jardin d'Epicure—a veritable breviary of scepticism. In Socrates he would discover a congenial companion; yet he might mischievously allude to Montaigne "concerning cats," or quote Aristotle on the form of hats. A wilful child of philosophy and *belles-lettres*, he may be always expected to say the startling.

Be humble! he exhorts. Be without intellectual pride! for the days of man, who is naught but a bit of animated pottery, are brief, and he vanishes like a spark. Thus Job—Anatole. Be humble! Even virtue may be unduly praised: "Since it is overcoming which constitutes merit, we must recognize that it is concupiscence which makes saints. Without it there is no repentance, and it is repentance which makes saints." To become a saint one must have been first a sinner. He quotes, as an example, the conduct of the blessed Pelagia, who accomplished her pilgrimage to Rome by rather unconventional means. Here, too, we recognize the amiable casuistry of Anatole—Voltaire. And there is something of Baudelaire and Barbey d'Aurevilly's piety of imagination with impiety of thought, in France's pronouncement. He is a Chrysostom reversed; from his golden mouth issue spiritual blasphemies.

Mr. Henry James has said that the province of art is "all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision." According to this rubric, France is a profound artist. He plays with the appearances of life, occasionally lifting the edge of the curtain to curdle the blood of his spectators by the sight of

Buddha's shadow in some grim cavern beyond. He has the Gallic tact of adorning the blank spaces of theory and the ugly spots of reality. A student of Kant in his denial of the objective, we can never picture him as following Königsberg's sage in his admiration of the starry heavens and the moral law. Both are relative, would be the report of the Frenchman. But, if he is sceptical about things tangible, he is apt to dash off at a tangent and proclaim the existence of that "school of drums kept by the angels," which the hallucinated Arthur Rimbaud heard and beheld. His method of surprising life, despite his ingenuous manner, is sometimes as oblique as that of Jules Laforgue. And, in the words of Pater, his is "one of the happiest temperaments coming to an understanding with the most depressing of theories."

For faith he yearns. He humbles himself beneath the humblest. He excels in picturing the splendors of the simple soul; yet faith has not anointed his intellect with its chrism. He admires the golden filigree of the ciborium; its spiritual essence escapes him. He stands at the portals of Paradise; there he lingers. He stoops to some rare and richly colored feather. He eloquently vaunts its fabulous beauty, but he will not listen to the whirring of the wings from which it has fallen. Pagan in his irony, his pity wholly Christian, Anatole France has in him something of Petronius and not a little of Saint Francis.

II

Born to the literary life, one of the elect whose career is at once a beacon of hope and despair for the less gifted or less fortunate, Anatole François Thibault first saw the heart of Paris in the year 1844. The son of a bookseller, Noël France Thibault, his childhood was spent in and around his father's book-shop, No. 9 du quai Voltaire, and his juvenile

memories are clustered about books. There are many faithful pictures of old libraries and book-worms in his novels. He has a moiety of that Oriental blood which is said to have tinctured the blood of Montaigne, Charles Lamb, and Cardinal Newman. The delightful Livre de Mon Ami gives his readers many glimpses of his early days. Told with incomparable naïveté and verve, we feel in its pages the charm of the writer's personality. A portrait of the youthful Anatole reveals his excessive sensibility. His head was large, the brow was too broad for the feminine chin, though the long nose and firm mouth contradict the possible weakness in the lower part of the face. It was in the eyes, however, that the future of the child might have been discerned—they were lustrous, beautiful in shape, with the fulness that argued eloquence and imagination. He was, he tells us, a strange boy, whose chief ambition was to be a saint, a second St. Simon Stylites, and, later, the author of a history of France in fifty volumes. Fascinating are the chapters devoted to Pierre and Suzanne in this memoir. His tenderness of touch and power of evoking the fairies of childhood are to be seen in Abeille. The further development of the boy may be followed in Pierre Nozière. In college life, he was not a shining figure, like many another budding genius. He loved Virgil and Sophocles, and his professors of the Stanislas College averred that he was too much given to day-dreaming and preoccupied with matters not set forth in the curriculum, to benefit by their instruction. But he had wise parents—he has paid them admirable tributes of his love—who gave him his own way. After some further study in L'Ecole des Chartes, he launched himself into literature through the medium of a little essay, La Légende de Sainte Radégonde, reine de France. This was in 1859. Followed nine years later a study of Alfred de Vigny, and in 1873 Les Poëmes dorées attracted the attention of the Parnassian group then under the austere leadership of Le-

conte de Lisle. Les Noces Corinthiennes established for him a solid reputation with such men as Catulle Mendès, Xavier de Ricard, and De Lisle. For this last-named poet young France exhibited a certain disrespect—the elder was irritable, jealous of his dignity, and exacted absolute obedience from his neophytes; unluckily a species of animosity arose between the pair. When, in 1874, he accepted a post in the Library of the Senate, Leconte de Lisle made his displeasure so heavily felt that France soon resigned. But he had his revenge in an article which appeared in *Le Temps,* and one that put the pompous academician into a fury. Catulle Mendès sang the praises of the early France poems: "Les Noces Corinthiennes alone would have sufficed to place him in the first rank, and to preserve his name from the shipwreck of oblivion," declared M. Mendès.

In 1881, with The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard he won the attention of the reading world, a crown from the Academy, and the honor of being translated into a half-dozen languages. From that time he became an important figure in literary Paris, while his reputation was further fortified by his criticisms of books—vagrom criticism, yet charged with charm and learning. He followed Jules Claretie on *Le Temps,* and there he wrote for five years (1886–1891) the *critiques,* which appeared later in four volumes, entitled La Vie Littéraire. Georg Brandes had said that, in the strict sense of the word, M. France is not a great critic. But Anatole France has said this before him. He despises pretentious official criticism, the criticism that distributes good and bad marks to authors in a pedagogic fashion. He may not be so "objective" as his one-time adversary, Ferdinand Brunetière, but he is certainly more convincing.

The quarrel, a famous one in its day, seems rather faded in our days of critical indifference. After his clever formula, that there is no such thing as objective criticism, that all criticism but records the adventures of one's soul among

the masterpieces, France was attacked by Brunetière—of whom the ever-acute Mr. James once remarked that his "intelligence has not kept pace with his learning." Those critical watchwords, "subjective" and "objective," are things of yester-year, and one hopes, forever. But in this instance there was much ink spilt, witty on the part of France, deadly earnest from the pen of Brunetière. The former annihilated his adversary by the mode metaphysical. He demonstrated that in the matter of judgment we are prisoners of our ideas, and he also formed a school that has hardly done him justice, for every impressionistic value is not necessarily valid. It is easy to send one's soul boating among masterpieces and call the result "criticism"; the danger lies in the contingency that one may not boast the power of artistic navigation possessed by Anatole France, a master steersman in the deeps and shallows of literature.

His own critical contributions are notable. Studies of Chateaubriand, Flaubert, Renan, Balzac, Zola, Pascal, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Rabelais, Hamlet, Baudelaire, George Sand, Paul Verlaine—a masterpiece of intuition and sympathy this last—and many others, vivify and adorn all they touch. A critic such as Sainte-Beuve, or Taine, or Brandes, France is not; but he exercises an unfailing spell in everything he signs. His "august vagabondage"—the phrase is Mr. Whibley's—through the land of letters has proved a boon to all students.

In 1897 he was received at the Académie Française, as the successor of Ferdinand de Lesseps. His addresses at the tombs of Zola and Renan are matters of history. As a public speaker, France has not the fiery eloquence of Jean Jaurès or Laurent Tailhade, but he displays a cool magnetism all his own. And he is absolutely fearless.

It is not through lack of technic that the structure of the France novels is so simple, his tales plotless, in the ordinary meaning of the word. Elaborate formal architecture he

does not affect. The novel in the hands of Balzac, Flaubert, Goncourt, and Zola would seem to have reached its apogee as a canvas upon which to paint a picture of manners. In the sociological novel, the old theatrical climaxes are absent, the old recipes for cooking character find no place. Even the love motive is not paramount. The genesis of this form may be found in Balzac, in whom all the modern fiction is rooted. Certain premonitions of the *genre* are also encountered in L'Education Sentimentale of Flaubert, with its wide gray horizons, its vague murmurs of the immemorial mobs of vast cities, its presentation of undistinguished men and women. Truly democratic fiction, by a master who hated democracy with creative results.

Anatole France, Maurice Barrès, Edouard Estaunie, Rosny (the brothers Bex), René Bazin, Bertrand, and the astonishing Paul Adam are in the van of this new movement of fiction with ideas, endeavoring to exorcise the "demon of staleness." French fiction in the last decade of the past century saw the death of the naturalistic school. Paris had become a thrice-told tale, signifying the wearisome "triangle" and the chronicling of flat beer. Something new had to be evolved. Lo! the sociological novel, which discarded the familiar machinery of fiction, rather than miss the new spirit. It is unnecessary to add that in America the fiction of ideas has not been, thus far, of prosperous growth; indeed, it is viewed with suspicion.

Loosely stated, the fiction of Anatole France may be divided into three kinds: fantastic, philosophic, and realistic. This arbitrary grouping need not be taken literally; in any one of his tales we may encounter all three qualities. For example, there is much that is fantastic, philosophic, real, in that moving and wholly human narrative of Sylvestre Bonnard. France's familiarity with cabalistic and exotic literatures, his deep love and comprehension of the Latin and Greek classics, his knowledge of mediæval legends and

learning, coupled with his command of supple speech, enable him to project upon a ground-plan of simple narrative extraordinary variations.

The full flowering of France's knowledge and imagination in things patristic and archæologic is to be seen in Thaïs, a masterpiece of color and construction. Thaïs is that courtesan of Alexandria, renowned for her beauty, wit, and wickedness, who was converted by the holy Paphnutius, saint and hermit of the Thebaïd. How the devil finally dislodges from the heart of Paphnutius its accumulation of virtue, is told in an incomparable manner. If Flaubert was pleased by the first offering of his pupil, Guy de Maupassant (Boule de Suif), what would he not have said after reading Thaïs? The ending of the wretched monk, following his spiritual victories as a holy man perched on a pillar —a memory of the author's youthful dream—is lamentable. He loves Thaïs, who dies; and thenceforth he is condemned to wander, a vampire in this world, a devil in the next. A monument of erudition, thick with pages of jewelled prose, Thaïs is a book to be savored slowly and never forgotten. It is the direct parent of Pierre Loüys's Aphrodite, and later evocations of the antique world.

Of great emotional intensity is Histoire Comique (1903). It is a study of the histrionic temperament, and full of the major miseries and petty triumphs of stage life. It also contains a startling incident, the suicide of a lovelorn actor. The conclusion is violent and morbid. The nature of the average actress has never been etched with such acrid precision. There are various tableaux of behind and before the footlights; a rehearsal, an actor's funeral, and the life of the greenroom. Set forth in his most disinterested style, M. France shows us that he can handle with ease so-called "objective" fiction. His Doctor Trublet is a new France incarnation, wonderful and kindly old consoler that he is. He is attached as house physician to the Odéon, and to him

the comedians come for advice. He ministers to them body and soul. His discourse is Socratic. He has wit and wisdom. And he displays the motives of the heroine so that we seem to gaze through an open window. As vital as Sylvestre Bonnard, as Bergeret, Trublet is truly an avatar of Anatole France. Histoire Comique! The title is a rare jest aimed at mundane and bohemian vanity.

Passing Jocaste et le Chat maigre, and Le Puits de Sainte-Claire, we come to L'Etui de Nacre, a volume of tales published in 1892. This book may be selected as typical of a certain side of its author, a side in which his fantasy and historic sense meet on equal terms. The most celebrated is Le Procurateur de Judée, who is none other than Pontius Pilate, old, disillusioned of public ambition, and grumbling, as do many retired public officers, at the ingratitude of governments and princes. To his friend he confesses finally, after his memory has been vainly prompted, that he has no recollection of Jesus, a certain anarchistic prophet of Judea, condemned by him to death. His final phrases give us, as in the flare of lightning, the withering, double-edged irony of the author. He has quite forgotten the tremendous events that occurred in Jerusalem; forgotten, too, is Jesus. Not all the stories that follow, not the pious records of Sainte Euphrosine, of Sainte Oliverie et Liberetta, of Amyeus and Celestin, of Scolastica, can rob the reader of this first cruel impression. In Balthasar the narratives are of a superior quality. Nothing could be better, for example, than the recital of the Ethiopian king who sought the love of Balkis, Queen of Sheba, was accepted, after proofs of his bravery, and then quietly forgotten. He studies the secrets of the spheres, and when Balkis, repenting of her behavior, seeks Balthasar anew, it is too late. He has discovered the star of Bethlehem which leads him straightway to the crib in company with Gaspar and Melchior, there to worship the King of Kings. Powerful, too, in its fantastic

evocation is La Fille de Lilith, which relates the adventure of a modern Parisian with a deathless daughter of Adam's first wife, Lilith, so named in the Talmud. Laeta Acilia tells us one of France's best anecdotes about a Roman matron residing at Marseilles during the reign of Tiberius. She encounters Mary Magdalen, who almost converts the woman by a promise of children, long desired. The conclusion is touching. It discloses admirably the psychology of the two women. L'Oeuf Rouge is a tale of Cæsarian madness, and the bizarre Le Réséda du Curé is so simply related that we are disarmed by the style.

A graceful collection is that called Clio, illustrated in the highly decorative manner of Mucha. Possibly the first is the best, a story of Homer. Some confess a preference for a Gaulish recital of the times when Cæsar went to Britain. Napoleon, too, is in the list. An interesting discussion of Napoleon and the Napoleonic legend is in a full-fledged novel, The Red Lily. "Napoleon," says one of its characters, "was violent and frivolous; therefore profoundly human. . . . He desired with singular force, all that most men esteem and desire. He had the illusions which he gave to the people. He believed in glory. He retained always the infantile gravity which finds pleasure in playing with swords and drums, and the sort of innocence which makes good military men. It is this vulgar grandeur which makes heroes, and Napoleon is the perfect hero. His brain never surpassed his hand—that hand, small and beautiful, which crumpled the world. . . . Napoleon lacked interior life. . . . He lived from the outside." In the art of attenuating great reputations Anatole France has had few superiors.

This novel displeased his many admirers, who pretend to see in it the influence of Paul Bourget. Yet it is a memorable book. Paul Verlaine is depicted in it with freshness, that poet Paul, and his childish soul so ironically, yet so lovingly distilled by his critic. There are glimpses of Flor-

ence, of Paris; the study of an English girl-poet will arouse pleasant memories of a lady well known to Italian, Parisian, and London art life. And there is the sculptor, Jacques Dechartres, who may be a mask, among many others of M. France. But Choulette-Verlaine is the lodestone of the novel.

Where the ingenuity and mental flexibility, not to say historical mimicry, of France are seen at their supreme, is in La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque. Jacques Tournebroche, or Turnspit, is an assistant in the cook-shop of his father, in old Paris. He is of a studious mind, and becomes the pupil of the Abbé Jérôme Coignard, "who despises men with tenderness," a figure that might have stepped out of Rabelais, though baked and tempered in the refining fires of M. France's imagination. Such a man! Such an ecclesiastic! He adores his maker and admires His manifold creations, especially wine, women, and song. He has more than his share of human weakness, and yet you wonder why he has not been canonized for his adorable traits. He is a glutton and a wine-bibber, a susceptible heart, a pious and deeply versed man. Nor must the rascally friar be forgotten, surely a memory of Rabelais's Friar John. There are scenes in this chronicle that would have made envious the elder Dumas; scenes of swashbuckling, feasting, and bloodshed. There is an astrologer who has about him the atmosphere of the black art with its imps and salamanders, and an ancient Jew who is the Hebraic law personified. So lifelike is Jérôme Coignard that a book of his opinions was bound to follow. His whilom pupil Jacques is supposed to be its editor. Le Jardin d'Epicure and Sur la Pierre Blanche (1905) are an excuse for the opinions of M. France on many topics—religion, politics, science, and social life. Notwithstanding their loose construction, they are never inchoate. That the ideas put forth may astound by their perversity, their novelty, their nihilism, their note of

cosmic pessimism, is not to be denied. Our earth, "a miserable small star," is a drop of mud swimming in space, its inhabitants mere specks, whose doings are not of importance in the larger curves of the destiny of the universe. Every illustration, geological, astronomical, and mathematical, is brought to bear upon this thesis—the littleness of man and the uselessness of his existence. But France loves this harassed animal, man, and never fails to show his love. Interspersed with moralizing are recitals of rare beauty, Gallion and Par la Porte de Corne ou par la Porte d'Ivoire. Here the classic scholar, that is the base of France's temperament, fairly shines.

In the four volumes of Histoire Contemporaine we meet a new Anatole France, one who has deserted his old attitude of Parnassian impassibility for a suave anarchism, one who enters the arena of contemporaneous life bent on slaughter, though his weapon is the keen blade, never the rude battle-axe of polemics. It is his first venture in the fiction of sociology; properly speaking, it is the psychology of the masses, not exactly as Paul Adam handles it in his striking and tempestuous Les Lions (a book Balzacian in its fury of execution), but with the graver temper of the philosopher. He paints for us a provincial university town with its intrigues, religious, political, and social. The first of the series is L'Orme du Mail; follow Le Mannequin d'Osier, L'Anneau d'Améthyste, and Monsieur Bergeret à Paris (1901). The loop that ensnares this quartet of novels is the simple motive of ecclesiastical ambition. Not since Ferdinand Fabre's L'Abbé Tigrane has French literature had such portraits of the priesthood; Zola's ecclesiastics are ill-natured caricatures. The Cardinal Archbishop, Abbé Lataigne, and the lifelike Abbé Guitrel, with the silent, though none the less desperate, fight for the vacant bishopric of Turcoing—these are the three men who with Bergeret carry the story on their shoulders. About them circle the entire

diocese and the tepid life of a university town. Yet anything further from melodramatic machinations cannot be imagined. Even the clerics of Balzac seem exaggerated in comparison. The protagonist is a professor, a master of conference of the University Faculty, a worthy man and earnest, though by no means of an exalted talent. He has the misfortune of being married to a worldly woman who does not attempt to understand him, much less to love him. She deceives him. The discovery of this deceit is an episode the most curious in fiction. It would be diverting if it were not painful. It reveals in Bergeret the preponderance of the man of thought over the man of action. His pupil and false friend is a classical scholar, therefore the affair might have been worse! And he is given the scholar's excuse as a plea for forgiveness! But hesitating as appears Bergeret, he utilizes his wife's treachery as a springboard from which to fly his miserable household. Henceforth, with his devoted sister and daughter, he philosophizes at ease and becomes a Dreyfusard. His dog Riquet is the recipient of his deepest thoughts. His monologues in the presence of this animal are the best in the book.

There are many characters in this serene and bitter tragicomedy. A contempt, almost monastic, peeps out in the treatment of his women. They are often detestable. They behave as if an empire was at stake, though it is only a conspiracy whereby Abbé Guitrel is made Bishop of Turcoing. France always displays more pity for the frankly sinful woman than for the frivolous woman of fashion. There is also a subplot, the effort of a young Hebrew snob, Bonmont by name (Guttenberg, originally), to get into the exclusive hunting set of the Duc de Brécé. This hunt-button wins for the diplomatic Abbé Guitrel his coveted see. M. France is unequalled in his portrayal of the modern French-Hebrew millionaire, the Wallsteins and Bonmonts. He draws them without *parti-pris*. His prefect, the easy-go-

ing, cynical Worms-Clavelin, with his secret contempt of Jews and Gentiles alike, and his wife who collects ecclesiastical bric-à-brac, are executed by a great painter of character. He exposes with merciless impartiality a mob of men and women in high life. But his aristocrats are no better than his ecclesiastics or bankers. There is a comic Orléanist conspiracy. There are happenings that set your hair on end, and a cynicism at times which forces one to regret that the author left his study to mingle with the world. Nor is the strain relieved when poor Bergeret goes to Paris; there he is enmeshed by the Dreyfus party. There he comes upon stormy days, though high ideals never desert him. He is as placid in the face of contemptuous epithets and opprobrious newspaper attacks as he was calm when stones were hurled at his windows in the provinces. A man obsessed by general ideas, he is lovable and never a bore, though M. Faguet and several other critics have cried him stupid. In the "fire of the footlights" M. Bergeret pales. For the drama M. France has no particular voice, though he has written several charming playlets. Even the superior acting of Guitry could not make of Crainquibille much more than a touching episode.

There is enough characterization and incident in Histoire Contemporaine to ballast a half-dozen novelists with material. And there are treasures of humor and pathos. The success of the series has been awe-inspiring; indeed, awe-inspiring is the success of all the France books, and at a time when Parisian prophets of woe are lamenting the decline of literature. Nevertheless, here is a man who writes like an artist, whose work, web and woof, is literature, whose themes, with few exceptions, are not of the popular kind, whose politics are violently opposed to current superstition, whose very form is hybrid; yet he sells, and has sold, in the hundreds of thousands. Literature cannot be called moribund in the face of such a result. His is a case

that sets one speculating without undue emphasis upon a certain superiority of French taste over English in the matter of fiction.

The Life of Jeanne d'Arc (1908), a work of scholarship and mixed prejudices, does not, I am forced to admit, unduly interest me. Whether the astonishing statements set forth therein are true is a question that may concern Mr. Lang, but hardly the lovers of the real Anatole. The Isle of Penguins (1908) gave him back to us in all his original glory.

An art, ironical, easy, fugitive, divinely untrammelled, divinely artificial, which, like a pure flame, blazes forth in an unclouded heaven . . . *la gaya scienza;* light feet; wit; fire; grace; the dance of the stars; the tremor of southern light; the smooth sea—these Nietzschean phrases might serve as an epigraph for the work of that apostle of innocence and experience, Anatole France.

X

THE PESSIMIST'S PROGRESS

J.-K. HUYSMANS

"Ah! Seigneur, donnez-moi la force et le courage
De contempler mon cœur et mon corps sans dégoût."

—BAUDELAIRE.

I

Joris-Karl Huysmans has been called mystic, naturalist, critic, aristocrat of the intellect; he was all these, a mandarin of letters and pessimist besides—no matter what other qualities persist throughout his work, pessimism is never absent. His firmament is clotted with black stars. He had a mediæval monk's contempt for existence, contempt for the mangy flock of mediocrity; yet his genius drove him to describe its crass ugliness in phrases of incomparable and enamelled prose. It is something of a paradox that this man of picturesque piety should have lived to be the accredited interpreter, the distiller of its quintessence, of that elusive quality, "modernity." The "intensest vision of the modern world," as Havelock Ellis puts it, Huysmans unites to the endowment of a painter the power of a rare psychologist, superimposed upon a lycanthropic nature. A collective title for his books might be borrowed from Zola: My Hatreds. He hated life and its eternal *bêtise*. His theme, with variations, is a strangling Ennui. With those devoted sons of Mother Church, Charles Baudelaire, Barbey D'Aurevilly, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and Paul Verlaine, eccentric sons whose actions so often dismayed their fellow worshippers of less genius, Huysmans has been affiliated. He was not a poet nor, indeed, a man of over-

whelming imagination. But he had the verbal imagination. He did not possess the talent of the novelist. His was not the flamboyant genius of Barbey, nor had he the fantastic invention of Villiers. He seems closer to Baudelaire, rather by reason of his ironic, critical temperament than because of his creative gifts. Baudelaire's oriflamme, embroidered with preciously devised letters of gold, reads: Spleen and Ideal; upon the emblematic banner of Huysmans this motto is Spleen. His work at times seems like a prolongation in prose of Baudelaire's. And by reason of his exacerbated temper he became the most personal writer of his generation. He belonged to no school, and avoided, after his beginnings, all literary groups.

He is recording-secretary of the petty miseries and ironies of the life about him. Over ugliness he becomes almost lyric. "The world is a forest of differences." His pen, when he depicts an attack of dyspepsia or neuralgia, or the nervous distaste of a hypochondriac for meeting people, is like the triple sting of a hornet. He is the prose singer of neurasthenia, a Hamlet doubting his digestion, a Schopenhauer of the cook-shops. When he paints the *nuance* of rage and disgust that assails a middle-aged man at the sight of a burnt mutton-chop, his phrases are unforgetable. The tragedy of the gastric juices he has limned with a fulness of expression that almost lifts pathology to the dignity of an art. A descendant of Flemish painters, sculptors, architects (Huysmans of Mechlin, the Antwerp-born painter of the seventeenth century, is said to have been a forebear), he inherited their powers of envisaging exterior life; those painters for whom flowers, vegetable markets, butcher-shops, tiny gentle Dutch landscapes, gray skies, skies of rutilant flames, and homely details were surfaces to be faithfully and passionately rendered. This vision he has interpreted with pen instead of brush. He is a virtuoso of the phrase. He is a performer on the single string of self.

He knows the sultry enharmonics of passion. He never improvises, he observes. All is willed and conscious, the cold-fire scrutiny of a trained eye, one keen to note the ignoble or any deviation from the normal. His pages are often sterile and smell of the lamp, but he has the candor of his chimera. Well has Remy de Gourmont called him an *eye*. In his prose, he sacrifices rhythmic variety and tone to color. His rhythms are massive, his tint at times a furious fanfare of scarlet. Every word, like a note in a musical score, has its value and position. He intoxicates because of his marvellous speech, but he seldom charms. It is a sort of sinister verbal magic that steals upon one as this ancient mariner from the lower moral deeps of Paris fixes you with his glittering eye, and in his strangely modulated language tells tales of blasphemy and fish-wives', tales of a half-forgotten river below the bed of the Seine, of dull cafés and dreary suburbs, of bored men and stupid women, of sordid, opulent souls, souls spongy and voluptuous, mean lives and meaner alleys—such an epic of ennui, mediocrity, bizarre sins, and neurotic, superstitious creatures was never given the world until Huysmans wrote Les Sœurs Vatard and A Rebours. Entire vanished districts of Paris may be reconstructed from his chapters. Zola declared, when Guy de Maupassant and Huysmans appeared side by side in Les Soirées de Médan, that the latter was the realist.

The unity of form and substance in Huysmans is a distinguishing trait. He had early mastered literary technic, and the handling of his themes varies but little. There are, however, two or three typical varieties of description which may be quoted as illustrations of his etched and jewel-like prose. A cow hangs outside a butcher-shop:

> As in a hothouse, a marvellous vegetation flourished in the carcass. Veins shot out on every side like the trails of bindweed; dishevelled branch-work extended itself along the body, an efflorescence of en-

trails unfurled their violent-tinted corollas, and big clusters of fat stood out, a sharp white, against the red medley of quivering flesh.

Surely a subject for Snyders or Jan Steen.

Léon Bloy somewhere describes Huysmans's treatment of the French language as "dragging his images by the heels or the hair up and down the worm-eaten staircase of terrified syntax." Huysmans, in A Rebours, had called M. Bloy "an enraged pamphleteer whose style was at once exasperated and precious." And can magnificence of phrase in evoking a picture go further than the following which shows us Gustave Moreau's Salome:

In the perverse odor of perfumes, in the overheated atmosphere of this church, Salome, her left arm extended in a gesture of command, her bent right arm holding on the level of the face a great lotus, advances slowly to the sound of a guitar, thrummed by a woman who crouches on the floor. With collected, almost anguished countenance, she begins the lascivious dance that should waken the sleeping senses of the aged Herod; her breasts undulate, become rigid at the contact of the whirling necklets; diamonds sparkle on the dead whiteness of her skin, her bracelets, girdles, rings, shoot sparks; on her triumphal robes sewn with pearls, flowered with silver, sheeted with gold, the jewelled breast-plate, whose every stitch is a precious stone, bursts into flame, scatters in snakes of fire, swarms on the ivory-toned, tea-rose flesh, like splendid insects with dazzling wings, marbled with carmine, dotted with morning gold, diapered with steel blue, streaked with peacock green.

Gautier,—who was for Huysmans only a prodigious reflector—Flaubert, Goncourt, could not have excelled this verbal painting, this bronze and baroque prose, which is both precise and of a splendor. Huysmans can describe a herring as would a great master of sumptuous still-life:

Thy garment is the palette of setting suns, the rust of old copper, the brown gilt of Cordovan leather, the sandal and saffron tints of the autumn foliage. When I contemplate thy coat of mail I think of Rembrandt's pictures. I see again his superb heads, his sunny flesh, his gleaming jewels on black velvet. I see again his rays of light in the night, his trailing gold in the shade, the dawning of suns through dark arches.

Or this invocation when Huysmans had begun to experience that shifting of moral emotion which we call his "conversion"—he was a Roman Catholic born, therefore was not converted; he but reverted to his early faith:

> Take pity, O Lord, on the Christian who doubts, on the sceptic who desires to believe, on the convict of life who embarks alone, in the night, beneath a sky no longer lit by the consoling beacons of ancient faith.

His method is not the recital of events, but the description of a situation; a scene, not a narration, but large tableaux. Action there is little; he is more static than dynamic. His characters, like Goncourt's, suffer from paralysis of the will, from hyperæsthesia. The soul in its primordial darkness interests him, and he describes it with the same penetrating prose as he does the carcass of an animal. He is a luminous mystic who speaks in terms of extravagant naturalism. A physiologist of the soul, at times his soul dwelt in a boulevard. His violent vivid style so excellent in setting forth colored sensations is equally admirable in the construction of metaphors which make concrete the abstract. There is the element of the grotesque, of the old ribald Fleming, in Huysmans, though without a trace of hearty Flemish humor. He once said that the memory of the inventor of card-playing ought to be blessed, the game kept closed the mouths of imbeciles. Nor is the pepper of sophistry absent. He sculptures his ideas. He is both morose and fulgurating. He squanders his emotions with polychromatic resignation unlike a Saint Augustine or a Newman; yet we are not deeply moved by his soul-experiences. It is not vibrating sincerity that we miss; it would be wrong to question his return to Catholicism. He is more convincing than Tolstoy; for one thing, there is no dissonance between his daily life and his writings, after the publication of En Route. Lucid as is his manner, clair-

voyant as the exposition of his soul at the feet of God, there is, nevertheless, an absence of unction and of tenderness which repels. Sympathy and tenderness are *bourgeois* virtues for Huysmans. Too complicated to admire, even recognize, the sane or the simple, he remained the morbid carper after he entered La Trappe and Solesmes. As an oblate, his fastidiousness was wounded by the minor annoyances of a severe regimen; his stomach ailed him always. Perhaps to his weak digestion and a neuralgic tendency we owe the bitterness and pessimism of his art. He was not a normal man. He loathed the inevitable discords of life with a startling intensity. The venomous salt of his wit he sprinkles over the raw turpitude of men and women. Woman for him was not of the planetary sex, but either a stupid or a vicious creature; sometimes both. Impassible as he was, he could be shocked into a species of sub-acid eloquence if the theme were the inutility of mankind. No Hebraic prophet ever launched such poignant phrases of disgust and horror at the world and its works. His favorite reading was in the mystics, à Kempis, Saint Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and the Flemish Ruysbroeck.

In a new edition of A Rebours he has told us that he was not pious as a youth, having been educated not at a religious school. A Rebours came out in 1884, and it was in July, 1892, at the age of forty-four, that he went to La Trappe de Notre-Dame d'Igny, situated near Fismes, and the Aisne and Marne. He confessed that he could not discover, during the eight intervening years, why he swerved to the Church of Rome. Diminution of vital energy was not the chief reason for his reversion. The operations of divine grace in Huysmans's case may be dated back to A Rebours. The modulation by the way of art was not a difficult one. And he had the good taste of giving us his experiences in the guise of art. It is the history of a conversion, though he is, without doubt, the Durtal of the books. The final

explosion of grace after years of unconscious mining, the definite illumination on some unknown Road to Damascus, took place between the appearance of Là Bas and En Route. We are spared the *technic* of faith reawakened; it had become part of his cerebral tissue. We are shown a Durtal, believer; also a Durtal profoundly disgusted with the oily, rancid food of La Trappe, and with the faces of some of his companions, and a Durtal who puffs surreptitious cigarettes. At Lourdes, in his last book, he is the same Durtal-Huysmans, grumbling at the odors of unwashed bodies, at the perspiring crowds, at the ignorance and cupidity of the shrine's guardians. A pessimist to the end. And for that reason he has often outraged the sensibilities of his co-religionists, who questioned his sincerity after such an exclamation as: "How like a rind of lard I must look!" uttered when he carried a dripping candle in a religious procession. But through the dreary mists of doubtings and black fogs of unfaith the lamp of the Church, a shining point, drew to it from his chilly ecstasies this hedonist. Like Taine and Nietzsche, he craved for some haven of refuge to escape the whirring wings of Wotan's ravens. And in the pale woven air he saw the cross of Christ.

Leslie Stephen wrote of Pascal: "Eminent critics have puzzled themselves as to whether Pascal was a sceptic or a genuine believer, having, I suppose, convinced themselves, by some process not obvious to me, that there is an incompatibility between the two characters." Huysmans may have been both sceptic and believer, but the dry fervor of the later books betrays a man who willingly humiliates and depreciates the intellect for the greater glory of God. Abbé Mugnier says that his sincerity is itself the form of his talent. His portrait of Simon the swineherd in En Route is mortifying to humans with proud stomachs; Huysmans penetrates the husks and filth and sees only a God-intoxicated soul. Here is, indeed, the "treasure of the humble."

At first, religion with Durtal was æsthetic, the beauty of Gothic architecture, the pyx that ardently shines, the bells that boom, the odors of frankincense that rolled through the nave of some old vast cathedral with flame-colored windows. In L'Oblat the feeling has widened and deepened. The walls of life have fallen asunder, the soul glows in the twilight of the subliminal self, glows with a spiritual phosphorescence. Huysmans is nearer, though not face to face with, God. The object of his prayer is the Virgin Mary; to the hem of her robe he clings like a frightened child at its mother's dress. All this may have been auto-suggestion, or the result of the "will to believe," according to the formula of Professor William James, yet it was satisfying to Huysmans, whose life was singularly lonely.

He was born on February 5, 1848, in Paris, and died in that city on May 12, 1907. Christened Charles-Marie-George, he signed his books Joris-Karl. He was educated at the Lyceum Saint-Louis. His family originally resided at Breda, Holland. His father was lithographer and painter. His mother was of Burgundian stock and boasted a sculptor in her ancestral line:—Huysmans came fairly by his love of art. He contemplated the profession of law; but, at the age of twenty, he entered the Ministry of the Interior, where he remained until 1897, a model, unassuming official, fond of first editions, posters, rare prints, and a few intimates. He went then to live at Ligugé, but returned to Paris after the expulsion of the Benedictines. He was elected first president of the Academy Goncourt, April 7, 1900. He was nominated chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and given the rosette of officer by Briand, though Huysmans begged that he should have no military honors at his funeral. It was for his excellent work as a civil servant that he was decorated, and not as a man of letters. At the time of his death, his reputation had suffered an eclipse; he was distrusted both by Catholics and free-think-

ers. But he never wavered. Attacked by a cancerous malady, he suffered the atrocious martyrdom of his favorite Saint Lydwine. Léon Daudet, François Coppée, and Lucien Descaves were his unwearying attendants. At the last, he could still read the prayers for the dying. He was buried in his Benedictine habit. But what an artist perished in the making of an amateur monk!

"His face," said an English friend, "with the sensitive, luminous eyes, reminded one of Baudelaire's portrait, the face of a resigned and benevolent Mephistopheles who has discovered the absurdity of the divine order, but has no wish to make improper use of his discovery. He gave me the impression of a cat, courteous, perfectly polite, most amiable, but all nerves, ready to shoot out his claws at the least word." (Huysmans, like Baudelaire, was fond of cats.) When I saw him five years ago in Paris, I was struck by the essentially Semitic contour of his head—some legacy of remote ancestors from the far-away Meuse.

II

As a critic of painting Huysmans revealed himself the possessor of a temperament that was positively ferocious in the presence of an unsympathetic canvas. His vocabulary and peculiar gift of invective were then exercised with astounding verbal if not critical results. Singularly narrow in his judgments for a man of his general culture, his intensity of vision concentrated itself upon a few painters and etchers; during the latter part of his life only religious art interested him, as had the exotic and monstrous in earlier years. And even in the former sphere he restricted his admiration, rather say idolatry, to a few men; he sought for character, an ascetic type of character, the lean and meagre Saviours and saints of the Flemish primitives arousing in him a fire almost fanatical. Between a Roger

Van der Weyden and a Giorgione there could be little doubt as to Huysmans's choice; the golden color-music of the great Venetian harmonist would have reached deaf ears. His Flemish ancestry told in his æsthetic tastes. He once said that he preferred a Leipsic man to a Marseilles man, "the big, phlegmatic, taciturn Germans to the gesticulating and rhetorical people of the south."

Huysmans never betrayed the slightest interest in doctrines of equality; for him, as for Baudelaire, socialism, the education of the masses, or democratic prophylactics were hateful. The virus of the "exceptional soul" was in his veins. Nothing was more horrible to him than the idea of universal religion, universal speech, universal government, with their concomitant universal monotony. The world is ugly enough without the ugliness of universal sameness. Variety alone makes this globe bearable. He did not believe in art for the multitude, and the tableau of a billion humans bellowing to the moon the hymn of universal brotherhood made him shiver—as well it might. Tolstoy and his semi-idiotic mujik, to whom Beethoven was impossible, aroused in Huysmans righteous indignation. Art is for those who have the brains and patience to understand it; it is not a free port of entry for poet and philistine alike. To it, though many are called, few are chosen. So is it with religion. That marvellous specimen of psychology, En Route, gave more offense to Roman Catholics than it did to sectarians of other faiths. Huysmans was a mystic, and to his temperament, as taut as a finely attuned fiddle, the easy-going methods of the average worshipper were absolutely blasphemous. So he could write in En Route: "And he—Durtal—called to mind orators petted like tenors, Monsabré, Didon, those Coquelins of the Church, and, lower yet than those products of the Catholic training school, that bellicose booby the Abbé d'Hulst." That same abbé lived to see the writer repentant and, himself, not only

to forgive, but to write eulogistic words of the man who had abused him.

L'Art Moderne was published between covers in 1883. It deals with the official salons of 1879, 1880–81 and the exposition of the Independents, 1880–81. The appendix, 1882, contains thumb-nail sketches of Caillebotte, whose bequest to the Luxembourg of impressionistic paintings, including Manet's Olympe, stirred all artistic and inartistic Paris; Gauguin, Mlle. Morisot, Guillaumin, Renoir, Pissaro, Sisley, Claude Monet, "the marine painter *par excellence*"; Manet, Roll, Redon, all men then fighting the stream of popular and academic disfavor. Since Charles Baudelaire's Salons, no volume on the current Paris exhibitions has appeared of such solid knowledge and literary power as Huysmans's. Admitting his marked prejudices, his numerous dogmatic utterances, there is nevertheless an attractive artistic quality backed up by the writer's stubborn convictions that persuade where the more liberal and brilliant Théophile Gautier never does. "Théo," who said that if he pitched his sentences in the air they always fell on their feet, like a cat, leaned heavily on his verbal magic. But even in that particular he is no match for Huysmans, who, boasting the blood of Fleming painters, sculptors, and architects, uses his pen as an artist his brush. Take another bit from his study of Moreau's Salome:

"A throne, like the high altar of a cathedral, rose beneath innumerable arches springing from columns, thick-set as Roman pillars, enamelled with varicolored bricks, set with mosaics, encrusted with lapis-lazuli and sardonyx in a palace like the basilica of an architecture at once Mussulman and Byzantine. In the centre of the tabernacle surmounting the altars, fronted with rows of circular steps, sat the Tetrarch Herod, the tiara on his head, his legs pressed together, his hands on his knees. His face was yellow, parchmentlike, annulated with wrinkles, withered by

age; his long beard floated like a cloud on the jewelled stars that constellated the robe of netted gold across his breast. Around this statue, motionless, frozen in the sacred pose of a Hindu god, perfumes burned, throwing out clouds of vapor, pierced, as by the phosphorescent eyes of animals, by the fire of precious stones set in the sides of the throne; then the vapor mounted, unrolling itself beneath arches where the blue smoke mingled with the powdered gold of great sun-rays fallen from the dome." . . . And of Salome he writes: "In the work of Gustave Moreau, conceived on no Scriptural data, Des Esseintes saw at last the realization of the strange, superhuman Salome that he had dreamed. She was no more the mere dancing girl . . . she had become the symbolic deity of indestructible Lust, the goddess of immortal Hysteria; the monstrous, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible Beast, poisoning like Helen of old all that go near her, all that look upon her, all that she touches."

Not only is there an evocation of material splendor in the above passages taken from A Rebours, but a note of cenobitic contempt for woman's beauty, which sounds throughout the books of Huysmans. It may be heard at its deepest in his study of Félicien Rops, the Belgian etcher and painter, who interpreted Baudelaire's *femmes damnées.* Rops, too, regarded woman in the light of a destroyer, a being banned by the early fathers of the Church, the matrix of sin. Huysmans's incomparable study of Rops—whose great powers have never been fully recognized because of his erotic and diabolic subjects—may be found in his Certains (1889).

In his description of the Independent exposition (1880) to which Degas, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, Forain, and others sent canvases, Huysmans drifts into literary criticism; he saw analogies between the paintings of the realists, impressionists, and the modern men of fiction,

Flaubert, Goncourt, Zola. "Have not," he asks, "the Goncourts fixed in a style deliberate and personal, the most ephemeral of sensations, the most fugacious of *nuances?*" So, too, have Manet, Monet, Pissaro, Raffaelli. Nor does he hesitate to make the avowal, still incomprehensible for those who are deceived by the prodigious blaring of critical trumpets, that Baudelaire is a true poet of genius; and that the *chef d'œuvre* of fiction is Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale. Naturally Edgar Degas is the only psychological interpreter of latter-day life. There is also a careful analysis of Manet's masterpiece, the Bar at the Folies-Bergères. Huysmans recognized Manet's indebtedness to Goya.

Certains is a valuable volume. Therein are Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Degas, Bartholomé, Raffaelli, Stevens, Tissot, Wagner—the painter, not the composer; Huysmans admits but one form in music, the Plain Chant—Cézanne, Chéret, Whistler—which true to the tradition of Parisian carelessness is spelled "Wisthler," as Liszt years before was called "Litz"—Rops, Jan Luyken, Millet, Goya, Turner, Bianchi, and other men. He gives to Millet his just meed of praise, no more—he views him as a designer rather than as a great painter. We get Huysmans in his quintessence. Scattered through his novels—if one may dare to ascribe this title to such an amorphous form—there are eloquent and burning pages devoted to various painters, but not with the amplitude and cool science displayed in his studies of Degas, Moreau, Rops, The Monster in Art—a monstrous subject masterfully handled—and Whistler. He literally discovered Degas, and in future books on rhetoric surely Huysmans's descriptions of Degas's old workwomen sponging their creased backs cannot be excluded without doing violence to the expressive powers of the French language. His eye mirrored the most minute details—in that he was Dutch-Flemish; the same merciless scrutiny is pursued in the life of the soul—he was

Flemish and Spanish: Ruysbroeck and St. John of the Cross, mystics both, with an amazing sense of the realistic.

Without a spacious imagination, Huysmans was a man of the subtlest sensibilities. There is a wealth of critical divination in his studies of Moreau and Whistler. Twenty or thirty years ago it was not so easy to range these two enigmas. Huysmans did so, and, in company with Degas and Rops, placed them so definitely that critics have paraphrased his ideas ever since. Baudelaire had recognized the glacial genius of Rops; Huysmans definitely consecrated it in Certains. For Huysmans the theme of love aroused his mordant wit—Flaubert, Goncourt, Baudelaire were all summoned at one time or another in their respective careers to answer the charge of poisoning public morals! And what malicious commentaries were drawn and etched by the versatile Rops.

Extraordinary as are Rops's delineations of Satan, the prose of Huysmans is not less graphic in interpreting the etched plate. In De Tout (1901) there is, literally, a little about everything. Not only are several unknown quarters of Paris sketched with a surprising freshness, but Huysmans goes far afield for his themes. He studies sleeping-cars and the sleepy city Bruges, the aquarium at Berlin—"most fastidious and most ugly"—the Gobelins, Quentin Matsys at Antwerp; but whether in illustrating with his pen the mobs at Lourdes or the intimate habits of a Parisian café, he never fails to achieve the exact phrase that illuminates. Nor is it all crass realism. His eye, the eye of a visionary as well as of a painter, penetrates to the marrow of the soul.

A Rebours is the history of a decadent soul in search of an earthly paradise. His palace of art is near Paris, and in it the Duc des Esseintes assembles all that is rare, perverse, beautiful, morbid, and crazy in modern art and literature. A Rebours is in reality a very precious work of

criticism by a distinguished critical temperament, written in a prose jewelled and shining, sharp as a Damascene dagger. This French writer's admiration for Moreau has been mentioned. Luyken comes in for his share; the bizarre Luyken of Amsterdam (1649–1712). Odilon Redon, the lithographer and illustrator of Poe, is lauded by Des Esseintes. Redon's work is not lacking in subtlety, and it is sometimes disagreeable; possibly the latter quality is aimed at by the painter. Redon certainly had in Poe a congenial subject; in Baudelaire also, for he has accomplished some shivering plates commemorating Fleurs du Mal.

Not such intractable reading as L'Oblat, withal difficult enough, is The Cathedral, which abounds in glorious chapters devoted to ecclesiastical painting, sculpture, and architecture. "It"—the Cathedral—"was as slender and colorless as Roger Van der Weyden's Virgins, who are so fragile, so ethereal, that they might blow away were they not held down to earth by the weight of their brocades and trains," is a passage in this storehouse of curious liturgical learning. Matsys, Memling, Dierck Bouts, Van der Weyden, painted great religious pictures because they possessed a naïve faith. Nowadays your painter has no faith; better, then, stick like Degas to ballet-girls and not soil canvas with profane burlesques. Always extreme, Huysmans jumped from the worldly audacities of Manet to the rebellious Christ of Grünewald. Van Eyck touched him where Van Dyck did not. He disliked the "supersensual and sublimated Virgins of Cologne," and pronounced Botticelli's Virgins masquerading Venuses. The Van der Weyden triptych of the Nativity in the old museum, Berlin, filled him with raptures, pious and æsthetic. The "theatrical crucifixions, the fleshly coarseness of Rubens" are naught when compared to the early Flemings. His pages on Rembrandt are admirable reading, "Rembrandt, who had the soul of a Judaizing Protestant . . . with his serious but

fervid wit, his genius for concentration, for getting a spot of the essence of sunlight into the heart of darkness . . . has accomplished great results; and in his Biblical scenes has spoken a language which no one before him had attempted to lisp." As Huysmans loathed the rancid and voluptuous "sacred" music of Gounod and other comic-opera writers of masses and hymns in the Church, so he abominated the modern "sacred" painters. James Tissot and Munkacsy come in for a critical flagellation. What could be more dazzling than his account of a certain stained-glass window in his beloved Cathedral at Chartres:

"Up there high in the air, as they might be Salamanders, human beings, with faces ablaze and robes on fire, dwelt in a firmament of glory; but these conflagrations were enclosed and limited by an incombustible frame of darker glass which set off the youthful and radiant joy of the flames by the contrast of melancholy, the suggestion of the more serious and aged aspect presented by gloomy coloring. The bugle-cry of red, the limpid confidence of white, the repeated hallelujah of yellow, the virginal glory of blue, all the quivering crucible of glass was dimmed as it neared this border dyed with rusty red, the tawny hues of sauces, the harsh purples of sandstone, bottle green, tinder brown, fuliginous blacks, and ashy grays." Not even Arthur Rimbaud, in his half-jesting sonnet on the "Vowels," indulged in such daring color symbolism as Huysmans. For a specimen of his most fulgurating style read his Camïeu in Red, in a little volume edited by Mr. Howells entitled Pastels in Prose, and translated by Stuart Merrill.

"To be rich, very rich, and found in Paris in face of the triumphal ambulance, the Luxembourg, a public museum of contemporary painting!" he cries in one of his essays. He was the critic of Modernity, as Degas is its painter, Goncourt its exponent in fiction, Paul Bourget its psychologist. He lashes himself into a fine rage over the enormous prices

paid some years ago by New York millionaires for the work of such artists as Bouguereau, Dubufe, Gérôme, Constant, Rosa Bonheur, Knaus, Meissonier. That the Christ before Pilate sold for 600,000 francs sets him fulminating against its painter. "Cet indigent décor brossé par le Brésilien de la piété, par le rastaquouère de la peinture, par Munkacsy."

Joris-Karl Huysmans ought to have been a painter; his indubitable gift for form and color were by some trick of nature or circumstance transposed to literature. So he brought to the criticism of pictures an eye abnormal in its keenness, and to this was superadded an abnormal power of expression.

After reading his Three Primitives you may be tempted to visit Colmar, where hang in the museum several paintings by Mathias Grünewald, who is the chief theme of the French writer's book. Colmar is not difficult to reach if you are in Paris, or pass through Strasburg. It is a town of over 35,000 inhabitants, the capital of Upper Alsace and about forty miles from Strasburg. There are several admirable specimens of the Rhenish school there, Van Eyck and Martin Schongauer (born 1450 in Colmar), the great engraver. His statue by Bartholdi is in the town, and, as Huysmans rather delicately puts it, is an "emetic for the eyes." He always wrote what he thought, and notwithstanding the odor of sanctity in which he departed this life, his name and his books are still anathema to many of his fellow Catholics. But as to the quality of this last study there can be no mistake. It is masterly, revealing the various Huysmanses we admire: the mystic, the realist, the penetrating critic of art, and the magnificent tamer of language. Hallucinated by his phrases, you see cathedrals arise from the mist and swim so close to you that you discern every detail before the vision vanishes; or some cruel and bloody canvas of the semi-demoniacal Grünewald, on

which a hideous Christ is crucified, surrounded by scowling faces. The swiftness in executing the verbal portrait allows you no time to wonder over the method; the evocation is complete, and afterward you realize the black magic of Huysmans.

In his Là Bas he described the Grünewald Crucifixion, once in the Cassel Museum, now at Carlsruhe. A tragic realism invests this work of Grünewald, who is otherwise a very unequal painter. Huysmans puzzled over the Bavarian, who was probably born at Aschaffenburg. Sundvart, Waagen, Goutzwiller, and Passavant have written of him. He was born about 1450 and died about 1530. He lived his later years in Mayence, lonely and misanthropic. Every one speaks of Dürer, the Cranachs, Schongauer, Holbein, but even during his lifetime Grünewald was not famous. To-day he is esteemed by those to whom the German and Belgian Primitives mean more than all Italian art. There is a bitterness, a pessimism, a delight in torture for the sake of torture in Grünewald's treatment of sacred subjects that must have shocked his more easy-going contemporaries. Huysmans, as is his wont, does not spare us in his recital of the horrors of that Colmar Crucifixion. For me the one now at Carlsruhe suffices. It causes a shudder, and some echo of the agony of the Passion permeates that solemn scene. Grünewald must have been a painter of fierce and exalted temperament. His Christs are ugly—the ugliness symbolical of the sins of the world;—this doctrine was upheld by Tertullian and Cyprian, Cyril and St. Justin.

And the cadaverous flesh tones! Such is his fidelity, a fidelity almost pathologic, that two such eminent men as Charcot and Richet testified, after study, to the too painful verity of this early German's brushwork. He depicted with shocking realism the malady known as St. Anthony's Fire, and a still more pathological interpretation by Huysmans follows. But he warmly praises the fainting mother, one

of the noble figures in German art. We allude now to the Colmar Crucifixion, with its curious introduction of St. John the Baptist in Golgotha, and the dark landscape through which runs a gloomy river. Fainting Mary, the mother of Christ, is upheld by the disciple John. There is a mysterious figure of a girl, an ugly but sorrowful face, and the lamb bearing the cross is at the foot of the cross. Audacious is the entire composition. It wounds the soul, and no doubt that is what Grünewald wished. His harsh nature saw in the crucifixion not a pious symbol, but the death of a god, an unjust death. So he fulminates upon his canvas his hatred of the outrage. How tender he can be we note in his Virgin.

On the back of this polyptique are a Resurrection and Annunciation. The latter is bad. The former is a dynamic picture representing Christ in a vast aureole arising to the sky, His guards tumbled over at the side of the tomb. There is an explosion of luminosity. Christ's face is radiant. He displays his palms upward, pierced by the nails. The floating aerial effect and the draperies are wonderfully handled. The museum wherein hang these works was formerly a convent of nuns, founded in 1232, and in 1849 turned into a museum. Huysmans rages, of course, over the change.

He finds among the Grünewalds at Colmar—there are nine in all—a St. Anthony bearded, that reminds him of a Father Hecker born in Holland. What a simile, made by a man who probably never saw the American priest except pictured!

He visits Frankfort-on-the-Main, and afterward, characteristically pouring his vials of wrath upon this New Jerusalem, he goes to the Staedel Museum and falls into ecstasies over the lovely head of a young woman called the Florentine, by an unknown master. Though he admires the Van der Weyden, the Bouts, and the Virgin of Van

Eyck, he really has eyes only for this exquisite, vicious, androgynous creature, and for the Virgin by the Master of Flemalle. After a vivid description of the Florentine Cybele he inquires into her artistic paternity, waving aside the suggestion that one of the Venezianos painted her. But which one? There are over eleven, according to Lanzi. Huysmans will not allow Botticelli's name to be mentioned, though he discerns certain Botticellian qualities. But he has never forgiven Botticelli for painting the Virgin looking like the Venus, and he hates the paganism of the Renaissance with an early Christian fervor. (Fancy the later Joris-Karl Huysmans and the early Walter Pater in a discussion about the Renaissance!) Huysmans himself was a Primitive. Much that he wrote would have been understood in the Middle Ages. The old Adam in this Fleming, however, comes to the surface as he conjectures the name of the enigmatic heroine. Is it that Giulia Farnese, called "Giulia la bella"—*puritas impuritatis*—who became the favorite of Pope Alexander VI? If it be—and then Huysmans writes some pages of perfect prose which suggest joyful depravity, as depraved as the people he paints with such marvellous color and precision. It is a peep behind the scenes of a Pagan Christian Rome.

The Master of Flemalle, whose Virgin he describes at the close of this volume, was the Jacques Daret born in the early years of the fifteenth century, a fellow student of Roger van der Weyden under Campin at Tournay. We confess that, while we enjoy the verbal rhapsodies of the author, we were not carried away by this stately Virgin and Child by Daret, though there are many Darets that once passed as the work of Roger van der Weyden. It has not the sweet melancholy, this picture, of Hans Memlinc's Madonnas, and the Van Eyck in the same gallery, as well as the Van der Weyden, are both worth a trip across Europe to gaze upon. However, on the note of a rapt devotion

Huysmans ends his book. The first edition, illustrated, was published in 1905, by Vanier-Messein. But there is a new (1908) edition, published by Plon, at Paris, and called Trois Eglises et Trois Primitifs. This latter is not illustrated. The three churches discussed are Notre Dame de Paris and its symbolism, Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois, and Saint Merry.

Poor, unhappy, suffering Huysmans! He trod the Road to Damascus on foot and not in a pleasant motor-car like several of his successors. The intimate side of the man, so hidden by him, is now being revealed to us by his friends. Recently, in the *Revue de Paris*, Mme. Myriam Harry, the writer of The Conquest of Jerusalem, tells us of her friendship with Huysmans, with a rather sentimental anecdote about his weeping over a dead love. When she met him he was already attainted with the malady which tortured him to the end. A lifetime sufferer from neuralgia and dyspepsia, he was half blind for a few months before his death. He touchingly alludes to his illness as both a punishment and a reparation for things he wrote in his Lourdes. In a letter dated January 5, 1907, he avows that nothing is more dangerous than to celebrate sorrow; all his books celebrate the physical miseries of life, the sorrows of the soul. Humbly this great writer admits that he must pay for the pages of that cruel book, the life of Sainte-Lydwine. The disease he so often described came to him at last and slew him.

III

To traverse the books of Huysmans is a true pessimistic progress; from Le Drageoir aux Epices (1874) to Les Foules de Lourdes (1906), the note, at times shrill, often profound, is never one of dulcification. The first book, a veritable little box of spices, was modelled on Baudelaire's Poèmes en Prose, but revealed to the acute critic a new per-

sonal shade. Its plainness is Gallic. That amusing, ironic sketch, L'Extase, gives us a key-note to the writer's disillusioned soul. Marthe (1876) caused a sensation. It was speedily suppressed. La Fille Elise and Nana the public could endure; but the cold-blooded delineation of vice in this first novel was too much for the Parisian who likes a display of sentiment or sympathy in the treatment of unsavory themes. Now, sympathy for sin or suffering is missing in Huysmans. Slow veils of pity never descend upon his sufferers. Like a surgeon who will show you a "beautiful disease," a "classic case," he exposed the life of the wretched Marthe, and, while he called a cat a cat, he forgot that certain truths are unfit for polite ears accustomed to the rotten-ripe Dumas *fils,* or the thrice-brutal Zola. It was in Marthe that Huysmans proclaimed his adherence to naturalism in these memorable words: "I write what I see, what I feel, and what I have experienced, and I write it as well as I can: that is all." This rubric he adhered to his life long, despite his change of spiritual base. He also said that there are writers who have talent, and others who have not talent. All schools, groups, cliques, whether romantic or naturalistic or decadent, need not count.

It was 1880 before Huysmans was again heard from, this time in collaboration with Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Henry Céard, Léon Hennique, and Paul Alexis. Les Soirées de Medan was the inappropriate title of a book of interesting tales. Huysmans's contribution, Sac au Dos, is a story of the Franco-Prussian war that would have pleased Stendhal by its sardonic humor. The hero never reaches the front, but spends his time in hospitals, and the nearest he gets to the glory of war is a chronic stomach-ache. The variations on this ignoble motive showed the malice of Huysmans. War is not hell, he says in effect, but dysentery is; how often a petty ailing has unmade a heroic soul. Yet in the Brussels edition of this story there was published the

following verse—the author seldom wrote poetry; he was hardly a poet, but as indicating certain religious preoccupations it is worth repeating:

"O croix qui veux l'austère, ô chair qui veux le doux,
O monde, ô évangile, immortels adversaires,
Les plus grands ennemis sont plus d'accord que vous,
Et les pôles du ciel ne sont pas plus contraires.
On monte dans le ciel par un chemin de pleurs,
Mais, que leur amertume a de douceurs divines!
On descend aux enfers par un chemin de fleurs,
Mais hélas! que ces fleurs nous préparent d'épines!
La fleur qui, dans un jour, sèche et s'épanouit,
Les bulles d'air et d'eau qu'un petit souffle casse,
Une ombre qui paraît et qui s'évanouit
Nous représentent bien comme le monde passe."

Naturally, in the face of Maupassant's brilliant Boule de Suif, Huysmans's sly attack on patriotism was overlooked. Croquis Parisiens (1880) contains specimens of Huysmans's astounding virtuosity. No one before has ever described sundry aspects of Paris with such verisimilitude—that Paris he said was, because of the Americans, fast becoming a "sinister Chicago." Balls, cafés, bars, omnibus-conductors, washerwomen, chestnut-sellers, hairdressers, remote landscapes and corners of the city, cabarets, la Bièvre, the underground river, with prose paraphrases of music, perfumes, flowers—Huysmans astonishes by his prodigality of epithet and justness of observation. What Manet, Pissaro, Raffaelli, Forain, were doing with oil and pastel and pencil, he accomplished with his pen. A Vau l'Eau followed in 1882. It is considered the typical Huysmans tale, and some see in Jean Folantin its unhappy hero, obsessed by the desire for a juicy beefsteak, the prototype of Durtal. Folantin is a poor employee in the Ministry who must exist on his annual salary of fifteen hundred francs. He haunts cheap restaurants, lives in cheap lodgings, is seedy and sour, with the nerves of a voluptuary. His sense

of smell makes his life a nightmare. The sordid recital would be comical but that it is so villainously real. It is the Odyssey of a dyspeptic. Dickens would have set us laughing over the woes of this Folantin, or Dostoïevsky would have made us weep—as he did in Poor Folk. But Huysmans has no time for tears or laughter; he must register his truth, and at the end an odor of stale cheese exhales from the printed page. Wretched Monsieur Folantin! Of the official life so clearly presented in some of Maupassant's tales, we get little; Huysmans is too much preoccupied with Folantin's stomach troubles. In the same volume, though published first in 1887, is Un Dilemme, which is a pitiful tale of a girl abandoned. Huysmans, while he came under the influence of L'Education Sentimentale, seems to have taken as a *leit motiv* the idiotic antics of Flaubert's Bouvard et Pécuchet. These mediocre maniacs were his models for mankind at large. Les Sœurs Vatard (1879), praised so warmly by Zola in The Experimental Novel, is not a novel, but kaleidoscopic Parisian pictures of intimate low life, executed with consummate finish, and closeness to fact. The two sisters Vatard, Céline and Désirée, with their love affairs, fill a large volume. There are minute descriptions of proletarian interiors, sewing-shops full of perspiring girls, railroad-yards, locomotives, and a gingerbread fair. The men are impudent scamps, bullies, *souteneurs*, the women either weak or vulgar. Veracity there often is and an air of reality—though these swaggerers and simpletons are silhouettes, not half as vital as Zola's Lise or Goncourt's Germinie Lacerteux. But atmosphere, *toujours* atmosphere —of that Huysmans is the compeller. Not a disagreeable scene, smell or sound does he spare his readers. And how many *genre* pictures he paints for us in this book!

We reach *bourgeois* life with En Ménage (1881). André and Cyprien the novelist and painter are not so individual as, say, old *père* Vatard in the preceding story. They

but serve as stalking horses for Huysmans to show the stupid miseries of the married state; that whether a man is or is not married he will regret it. Love is the supreme poison of life. André is deceived by his wife, Cyprien lives lawlessly. Neither one is contented. The novel is careful in workmanship; it is like Goncourt and Flaubert, both gray and masterful. But it leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Like the early Christian fathers, Huysmans had a conception of Woman, "the eternal feminine of the eternal simpleton," which is hardly ennobling. The painter Cyprien is said to be a portrait of the author.

A Rebours appeared at the psychologic moment. Decadence was in the air. Either you were a decadent or violently opposed to the movement. Verlaine had consecrated the word—hardly an expressive one. The depraved young Jean, Duke of Esseintes, greedy of exotic sensations, who figures as the hero of this gorgeous prose mosaic, is said to be the portrait of a Parisian poet, and a fashionable dilettante of art painted by Whistler. But there is more of Huysmans—the exquisite literary critic that is Huysmans—in the work. If, as Henry James remarks: "When you have no taste you have no discretion—which is the conscience of taste," then Huysmans must be acclaimed a man of unexampled tact. His handling of a well-nigh impossible theme, his "technical heroism," above all, his soul-searching tactics in that wonderful Chapter VII, when Des Esseintes, suffering from the malady of the infinite, proceeds to examine his conscience and portrays for us the most fluctuating shades of belief and feeling—his touch here is sure, and casuistically immoral, as "all art is immoral for the inartistic." The chief value of the book for future generations of critics lies in Chapters XII and XIV. Huysmans's literary and artistic preferences are catalogued with delicacy and erudition. More Byzantine than Byzance, A Rebours is a storehouse of art treasures, and it

was once the battle-field of the literary élite. It is a history of the artistic decadent, the man of disdainful inquietudes who searches for an earthly artificial paradise. The mouth orchestra which, by the aid of various liquors, gives to the tongue sensations analogous to music; the flowers and perfume concerts, the mechanical landscape, the mock sea—all these are mystifications. Huysmans the *farceur*, the Jules Verne of æsthetics, is enjoying himself. His liquor symphony he borrowed from La Chimie du Goût by Polycarpe Poncelet; from Zola, perhaps, his concert of flowers. As for the originality of these diversions, we may turn to Goethe and find in his Triumph der Empfindsamkeit the mechanical landscape of the Prince, who can enjoy sunlight or moonlight at will. He has also a doll to whom he sighs, rhapsodizes, and passes in its silent company hours of rapture. Villiers de l'Isle Adam evidently read Goethe: see his Eve of the Future. All of which shows the folly of certain critics who recognize in Huysmans the prime exemplar of the decadent—that much misunderstood word. But how about Goethe? A Rebours, notwithstanding Huysmans's later pilgrimage to Canossa, he never excelled. It is his most personal achievement. It also contains the most beautiful writing of this Paganini of prose.

En Rade (1887) did not attract much attention. It is not dull; on the contrary, it is very Huysmansish. But it is not a subject that enthralls. Jacques Marles and his wife have lost their money. They go into the country to live cheaply. The author's detestation of nature was apparently the motive for writing the book. There are fantastic dreams worthy of H. G. Wells, and realistic descriptions of a calf's birth and a cat's agony; the last two named prove the one-time disciple of Zola has not lost his vision; the truth is, that Zola's method was melodramatic, romantic, vague, when compared to Huysmans's implacable manner of etching petty facts.

But in Là Bas he takes a leap across the ditch of naturalism and reaches another, if not more delectable, territory. This was in 1891. A new manifesto must be made—the Goncourts had printed a bookful. Symbolism, not naturalism, is now the shibboleth. Huysmans declares that:

> It is essential to preserve the veracity of the document, the precision of detail, the fibrous and nervous language of Realism, but it is equally essential to become the well-digger of the soul, and not to attempt to explain what is mysterious by mental maladies. . . . It is essential, in a word, to follow the great road so deeply dug out by Zola, but it is also necessary to trace a parallel pathway in the air, another road by which we may reach the Beyond, to achieve thus a Spiritual naturalism.

And by a curious, a bizarre route Durtal, the everlasting Durtal, sought to achieve spiritually—a spirituality *à rebours,* for it was by devil-worship and the study of Gilles de Rais of ill-fame, that he reached his goal. We also study church bells, *incubi,* satanism, demons, witches, sacrileges of a *raffiné* sort; indeed, an enormous amount of occult lumber is dumped into the book, which is indigestible on that account. Diabolic lore *à la* Jules Dubois and other modern magi is profuse. That wicked lady, who is far from credible, Madame Chantelouve, flits through various chapters. Her final disappearance, one hopes "below"—like the devils in the pantomime—is received by Durtal and the reader with a sigh of relief. She is quite the vilest character in French fiction, and, as Stendhal would have said, her only excuse is that she never existed. The Black Mass is painted by an artist adroit in the manipulation of the sombre and magnificent.

Là Bas proved a prophetic weather-vane. En Route in 1895 did not astonish those who had been studying the spiritual fluctuations of Huysmans. Behold the miracle! He is a believing Christian. Wisely the antecedent causes were tacitly avoided. "I believe," said Durtal, simply. Of superior interest is his struggle up the ladder of perfection.

This painful feat is slowly accomplished in La Cathédrale (1898), L'Oblat (1903), and Lourdes (1906). And it must be confessed that the more pious grew Huysmans the less artist he—as might have been expected. What is his art to a man who is concerned not with the things of this world? He never lost his acerbity, or his faculty for the phrase magical, though his sense of proportion gradually vanished. Luckily, he is not saccharine like the majority of writers on religious topics. Ferdinand Brunetière complained that Flaubert was unbearably erudite in his three short stories—echoing what Sainte-Beuve had said of Salammbô years before. What must he have thought of the astonishing Cathedral of Huysmans, with its chapters on the symbolism of architecture, sculpture, gems, flowers (Sir Thomas Browne and his quincunxes are fairly beaten from the field), vestments, sacred vessels of the altar, and a multitude of mysterious things, hieroglyphics, and dark liturgical riddles? There are ravishing pages, though none so solemn and moving as the description of the *De profundis* and *Dies iræ* in En Route.

It may prove profitable for the student after reading La Cathédrale to take up Walter Pater's unfinished story, Gaston De Latour, and read the description therein of the Chartres Cathedral. These are pages of exquisitely felt prose, but Huysmans sees more and tells what he sees in less musical though more lapidary phrases.

For any one except the trailer after strange souls The Oblate is an affliction. Madame Bavoil, with her "*notre ami,*" is a chattering nuisance, withal a worthy creature. Durtal is always in the dumps. He speaks much of interior peace, but he gives the impression of a man sitting painfully amidst spiritual brambles. Perhaps he felt that for him after his Golgotha are the sweet-singing flames of Purgatory. We are not sorry when he returns to Paris. As for the book on Lourdes, it is like an open wound. A whiff

from the operating-room of a hospital comes to you. We are edified by the childlike faith with which Huysmans accepts the report of cures that would stagger the most perfervid Christian Scientist. His Saint-Lydwine is hard reading, written by a man whose mysticism was a matter of rigid definition, a thing to be weighed and felt and verbally proved. Fleming-like, he is less melodist than harmonist—and such acrid harmonies, polyphonic variations, and fuguelike flights to the other side of good and evil.

George Moore was the first English critic to recognize Huysmans. He wrote that "a page of Huysmans is as a dose of opium, a glass of exquisite and powerful liquor." Frankly, it was his conversion that focussed upon Huysmans so much attention; no one may remain isolated in his century. He has never been a favorite with the larger Parisian public; rather, a curiosity, a spiritual ogre turned saint. And the saintship has been hotly disputed. Abbé Mugnier and Dom A. du Bourg, the prior of Sainte-Marie, since his death, have written eloquently about his conversion, his life as an oblate, and his edifying death. Huysmans refused anæsthetics because he wished to suffer for his life of sin, above all suffer for his early writings. Need it be added that, like Tolstoy, he repudiated absolutely his first books? Huysmans Intime is the title of the recollections of both Dom du Bourg and Henry Céard. His literary executors destroyed many manuscripts. He left his money principally to charities.

Huysmans was not a man possessing what are so vaguely denominated "general ideas." He was never interested in the chess-play of metaphysics, politics, or science. He was a specialist, one who had ransacked libraries for curious details, despoiled perfumers' catalogues for their odorous vocables, pored over technical dictionaries for odd-colored words, and studied cook-books for savory terms. His gamut of sensations began at the violet ray. He was a

perverse aristocrat who descended to the gutter there to analyze the various stratifications of filth; when he returned to his ivory cell, he had discovered, not humanity, but its anodyne, the love of God. Thenceforth, he was interested in one thing—the saving of the soul of Joris-Karl Huysmans, and being a marvellous verbal artist, his recital of the event startled us, fascinated us. Renan once wrote of Amiel: "He speaks of sin, of salvation, of redemption and conversion, as if these things were realities." Let us rather imitate Sainte-Beuve, who said: "You may not cease to be a sceptic after reading Pascal, but you must cease to treat believers with contempt." And this injunction is not difficult to obey in the case of Huysmans, for whom the things derided by Renan were the profoundest realities of his troubled life.

XI

PHASES OF NIETZSCHE

I

THE WILL TO SUFFER

Coleridge quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds as declaring that "the greatest man is he who forms the taste of a nation; the next greatest is he who corrupts it." It is an elastic epigram and not unlike the rule which is poor because it won't work both ways. All master reformers, heretics, and rebels were at first great corrupters. It is a prime necessity in their propaganda. Aristophanes and Arius, Mohammed and Napoleon, Montaigne and Rabelais, Paul and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Voltaire and Rousseau, Darwin and Newman, Liszt and Wagner, Kant and Schopenhauer —here are a few names of men who undermined the current beliefs and practices of their times, whether for good or evil. Rousseau has been accused of being the greatest corrupter in history; yet to him we may owe the Constitution of the United States. Pascal, in prose of unequalled limpidity, denounced the Jesuits as corrupting youth. Nevertheless, Dr. Georg Brandes, an "intellectual" and a philosophic anarch, once wrote to Nietzsche: "I, too, love Pascal. But even as a young man I was on the side of the Jesuits against Pascal. Wise men, it was they who were right; he did not understand them; but they understood him and . . . they published his Provincial Letters with notes themselves. The best edition is that of the Jesuits." Were not Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt the three unspeakable devils of painting for Blake? Loosely speaking, then, it doesn't much matter whether one considers a great

man as a regenerator or a corrupter. Napoleon was called the latter by Taine after he had been saluted as demigod by his idolatrous contemporaries. Nor does the case of Nietzsche differ much from his philosophic forerunners. He scolded Schopenhauer, though borrowing his dialectic tools, as he later mocked at the one sincere friendship of his lonely life, Richard Wagner's. We know the most objective philosophies are tinged by the individual temperaments of their makers, and perhaps the chief characteristic of all philosophers is their unphilosophic contempt for their fellow-thinkers. Nietzsche displayed this trait; so did Richard Wagner—who was in a lesser fashion an amateur philosopher, his system adorned by plumes borrowed from Feuerbach, Schelling, and Schopenhauer. Arthur Schopenhauer was endowed with a more powerful intellect than either Wagner or Nietzsche. He "corrupted" them both. He was materialist enough to echo the epigram attributed to Fontenelle: To be happy a man must have a good stomach and a wicked heart.

Friedrich Nietzsche was more poet than original thinker. Merely to say Nay! to all existing institutions is not to give birth to a mighty idea, though the gesture be brave. He substituted for Schopenhauer's "Will to Live"—(an ingenious variation of Kant's "Thing in Itself") the "Will to Power"; which phrase is mere verbal juggling. The late Eduard von Hartmann built his house of philosophy in the fog of the Unconscious; Nietzsche, despising Darwin as a dull grubber, returned unknowingly to the very land of metaphysics he thought he had fled forever. He was always the theologian—*toujours sćminariste,* as they said of Renan. Theology was in his blood. It stiffened his bones. Abusing Christianity, particularly Protestant Christianity, he was himself an exponent of a theological odium of the virulent sort, as may be seen in his thundering polemics. He held a brief for the other side of good and evil; but a

man can't so easily empty his veins of the theologic blood of his forebears. It was his Nessus shirt and ended by consuming him. He had the romantic cult of great men, yet sneered at Carlyle for his Titanism. He believed in human perfectibility. He borrowed his Superman partly from the classic pantheon, partly from the hierarchy of Christian saints—or perhaps from the very Cross he vituperated. The only Christian, he was fond of saying, died on the Cross. The only Nietzschean, one might reply, passed away when crumbled the brilliant brain of Nietzsche. Saturated with the culture of Goethe, his Superman was sent ballooning aloft by the poetic afflatus of Nietzsche.

He was an apparition possible only in modern and rationalistic Protestant Germany. Like a voice from the Middle Ages he has stirred the profound phlegm and spiritual indifference of his fellow countrymen. But he has in him more of Savonarola than Luther—Luther, who was for him the apotheosis of all that is hateful in the German character: the self-satisfied philistinism, sensuality, beer and tobacco, unresponsiveness to all the finer issues of existence, pious tactlessness and harsh dogmatism.

His truth is enclosed in a transcendental vacuum. Whether he had Galton's science of Eugenics in his mind when he modelled his Zarathustra we need not concern ourselves. His revaluation of moral values has not shaken morality to its centre. He challenged superficial conventional morality, but the ultimate pillars of faith still stand. He reminds us of William Blake when he writes: "The path to one's heaven ever leads through the voluptuousness of one's own hell." And his psychical resemblance to Pascal is striking. Both men were physically debilitated; their nervous systems, overwhelmed by the burdens they imposed upon them, made their days and nights a continuous agony. The Nietzschean philosophy may be negligible, but the psychological aspects of this singularly versatile, fas-

cinating, and contradictory nature are not. His "Will to Power" in his own case resolves itself into the will to suffer. Compared to his, Schopenhauer's pessimism is the good-natured grumbling of a healthy, witty man, with a tremendous vital temperament. Nietzsche was delicate from youth. His experiences in the Franco-Prussian war harmed him. Headache, eye trouble, a weak stomach, coupled with his abuse of intellectual work, and, toward the last, indulgence in narcotics for insomnia, all colored his philosophy. The personal bias was unescapable, and this bias favored sickness, not health. Hence his frantic apotheosis of health, the dance and laughter, and his admiration of Bizet's Carmen. Hence his constant employment of joyful imagery, of bold defiance to the sober workaday world. His famous injunction: "Be hard!" was meant for his own unhappy soul, ever nearing, like Pascal's, the abyss of black melancholy.

While we believe that too much stress has been laid upon the pathologic side of Pascal's and Nietzsche's characters, there is no evading the fact that both seemed tinged with what Kurt Eisner calls *psychopathia spiritualis*. The references to suffering in Nietzsche's books are significant. There is a vibrating accent of personal sorrow on every page. He lived in an inferno, mental and physical. We are given to praising Robert Louis Stevenson for his cheerfulness in the dire straits of his illness. He was a mere amateur of misery, a professional invalid, in comparison with Nietzsche. And how cruel was the German poet to himself. He tied his soul to a stake and recorded the poignant sensations of his spiritual *auto-da-fé*. At the close of his sane days we find him taking a dolorous pride in his capacity for suffering. "It is great affliction only—that long, slow affliction in which we are burned as it were with green wood, which takes time—that compels us philosophers to descend into our ultimate depth and divest ourselves of all trust, all

good nature, glossing, gentleness. . . . I doubt whether such affliction improves us; but I know that it deepens us. . . . Oh, how repugnant to one henceforth is gratification, coarse, dull, drab-colored gratification, as usually understood by those who enjoy life! . . . Profound suffering makes noble; it separates. . . . There are free, insolent minds that would fain conceal and deny that at the bottom they are disjointed, incurable souls—it is the case with Hamlet." Nietzsche has the morbidly introspective Hamlet temper, and Pascal has been called the Christian Hamlet.

We read in Overbeck's recollections that Nietzsche manifested deep interest in the personality of Pascal. Both hated hypocrisy. But the German thinker saw in the Frenchman of genius only a Christian who hugged his chains, one who for his faith suffered "a continuous suicide of reason." (Has not Nietzsche himself also said hard things about Reason?) "One is punished best by one's virtues" . . . or, "He who fights with monsters, let him be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee." This last is unquestionably a reminiscence of Pascal. He could not endure with equanimity Pascal's *sacrifizio dell' intelletto,* not realizing that the Frenchman felt beneath his feet the solid globe of faith. He discerned the Puritan in Pascal, though failing to recognize the Puritan in himself. Despite his praise of the Dionysian element in art and life, a puritan was buried in the nerves of Nietzsche. He never could tolerate the common bourgeois joys. Wine, Women, Song, and their poets, were his detestations. Yet he hated Puritanism in Protestant Christianity. "The dangerous thrill of repentance spasms, the vivisection of conscience," he contemns; "even in every desire for knowledge there is a drop of cruelty." He wrote to Brandes: "Physically, too, I lived for years in the neighborhood of death. This was my great piece of good fortune; I forgot myself. I out-

lived myself—a shedding of the skin." Pascal also knew the sting of the flesh and brain. From the time he had an escape from sudden death, he was conscious of an abyss at his side. "Men of genius," he wrote, "have their heads higher but their feet lower than the rest of us." With Nietzsche there was a darker *nuance* of pain; he speaks somewhere of "the philtre of the great Circe of mingled pleasure and cruelty." His soul was a mysterious palimpsest. The heart has its reasons, cried Pascal; of Nietzsche's heart the last word has not been written.

His criticism of Pascal was not clement. He said: "In Goethe the superabundance becomes creative, in Flaubert the hatred; Flaubert, a new edition of Pascal, but as an artist with instinctive judgment at bottom. . . . He tortured himself when he composed, quite as Pascal tortured himself when he thought." Yes, but Nietzsche was as fierce a hater as Pascal or Flaubert. He set up for Christianity a straw adversary and proceeded to demolish it. He forgot that, as Francis Thompson has it: "It is the severed head that makes the Seraph." Nietzsche would not look higher than the mud around the pedestal. He, poor sufferer, was not genuinely impersonal. His tragedy was his sick soul and body. "If a man cannot sing as he carries his cross, he had better drop it," advises Havelock Ellis. Nietzsche bore a terrible cross—like the men staggering with their chimeras in Baudelaire's poem—but he did not bear it with equanimity. We must not be deceived by his desperate gaiety. As a married man he would never have enjoyed, as did John Stuart Mill, spiritual henpeckery. He was afraid of life, this dazzling Zarathustra, who went on Icarus-wings close to the sun. He could speak of women thus: "We think woman deep—why? Because we never find any foundation in her. Woman is not even shallow." Or, "Woman would like to believe that love can do all—it is a superstition peculiar to herself. Alas, he who knows

the heart finds out how poor, helpless, pretentious, and liable to error even the best, the deepest love is—how it rather destroys than saves."

Der Dichter spricht! Also the bachelor. Once a Hilda of the younger generation, Lou Salomé by name, came knocking at the door of the poet's heart. It was in vain. The wings of a great happiness touched his brow as it passed. No wonder he wrote: "The desert grows; woe to him who hides deserts"; "Woman unlearns the fear of man"; "Thou goest to women! Remember thy whip." (Always this resounding motive of cruelty.) "Thy soul will be dead even sooner than thy body"; "Once spirit became God; then it became man; and now it is becoming mob"; "And many a one who went into the desert and suffered thirst with the camels, merely did not care to sit around the cistern with dirty camel-drivers." Here is the aristocratic radical.

It is weakness, admitted Goethe, not to possess the capacity for noble indignation; but Nietzsche was obsessed by his indignations. His voice, that golden poet's voice, becomes too often shrill, cracked, and falsetto. Voltaire has remarked that the first man who compared a woman to a rose was a poet, the second a fool. In his attitude toward Woman, Nietzsche was neither fool nor poet; but he never called her a rose. Nor was he a cynic; he saw too clearly for that, and he had suffered. Suffering, however, should have been a bond with women. Despite his cruel utterances he enjoyed several ideal friendships with cultivated women. "There is no happy life for woman—the advantage that the world offers her is her choice in self-sacrifice," wrote Mr. Howells. Gossip has whispered that he was hopelessly in love with Cosima Wagner. A charming theme for a psychological novel. So was Von Bülow, once—until he married her; so, Anton Rubinstein. Both abused Wagner's music; Von Bülow after he became an advocate of

Brahms; Rubinstein always. Nietzsche, just before 1876, experienced the pangs of a Wagnerian reactionary. A pretty commentary this upon masculine mental superiority if one woman (even such a remarkable creature as Cosima) could upset the stanchest convictions of these three men. And convictions, asserted Nietzsche, are prisons. He contrived to escape from many intellectual prisons. Cosima had proved the one inflexible jailer.

Merciless to himself, he did not spare others. Of Altruism, with its fundamental contradictions, he wrote:

> A being capable of purely altruistic actions alone is more fabulous than the Phœnix. Never has a man done anything solely for others, and without any personal motive; how could the Ego act without Ego? . . . Suppose a man wished to do and to will everything for others, nothing for himself, the latter would be impossible, for the very good reason that he must do very much for himself, in order to do anything at all for others. Moreover, it presupposes that the other is egoist enough constantly to accept these sacrifices made for him; so that the men of love and self-sacrifice have an interest in the continued existence of loveless egoists who are incapable of self-sacrifice. In order to subsist, the highest morality must positively enforce the existence of immorality.—(Menschliches, I, 137–8.)

"Nietzsche's criticism on this point," remarks Professor Seth Pattison, "must be accepted as conclusive. Every theory which attempts to divorce the ethical end from the personality of the moral agent must necessarily fall into this vicious circle; in a sense, the moral centre and the moral motive must always ultimately be self, the satisfaction of the self, the perfection of the self. The altruistic virtues, and self-sacrifice in general, can only enter into the moral ideal so far as they minister to the realization of what is recognized to be the highest type of manhood, the self which finds its own in all men's good. Apart from this, self-sacrifice, self-mortification for its own sake, would be a mere negation, and, as such, of no moral value whatever."

Hasn't this the familiar ring of Max Stirner and his doctrine of the Ego?

Nietzsche with Pascal would have assented that "illness is the natural state of the true Christian." There was in both thinkers a tendency toward self-laceration of the conscience. "Il faut s'abêtir," wrote Pascal; and Nietzsche's pride vanished in the hot fire of suffering. The Pascal injunction to stupefy ourselves was not to imitate the beasts of the field, but was a counsel of humility. Montaigne in his essay on Raymond de Sebonde wrote before Pascal concerning the danger of overwrought sensibility (Il nous faut abestir pour nous assagir, is the original old French). It would have been wise for Nietzsche to follow Pascal's advice. "We live alone, we die alone," sorrowfully wrote the greatest religious force of the past century, Cardinal Newman (a transposition of Pascal's "Nous mourrons seuls"). Nietzsche was the loneliest of poets. He lived on the heights and paid the penalty, like other exalted searchers after the vanished vase of the ideal.

II

NIETZSCHE'S APOSTASY

Although Macaulay called Horace Walpole a "wretched fribble," that gossip knew a trick or two in fancy fencing. "Oh," he wrote, "I am sick of visions and systems that shove one another aside and come again like figures in a moving picture." This was the outburst of a man called insincere and fickle, but frank in this instance. Issuing from the mouth of Friedrich Nietzsche this cry of the entertaining, shallow Walpole would have been curiously apposite. The unhappy German poet and philosopher suffered during his intellectual life from the "moving pictures" of other men's visions and systems, and when he finally es-

caped them all and evoked his own dream-world his brain became overclouded and he passed away "trailing clouds of glory." It is an imperative necessity for certain natures to change their opinions, to slough, as sloughs a snake its skin, their master ideas. Renan went still further when he asserted that all essayists contradict themselves sometime during their life.

With Nietzsche the apparent contradictions of his Wagner-worship and Wagner-hatred may be explained if we closely examine the concepts of his first work of importance, The Birth of Tragedy. It was a misfortune that his bitterest book, The Wagner Case, should have been first translated into English, for Wagner is our music-maker now, and the rude assaults of Nietzsche fall upon deaf ears; while those who had read the earlier essay, Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, were both puzzled and outraged. Certainly the man who could thus flout what he once adored must have been mad. This was the popular verdict, a facile and unjust verdict. What Nietzsche first postulated as to the nature of music he returned to at the close of his life; the mighty personality of Richard Wagner had deflected the stream of his thought for a few years. But as early as 1872 doubts began to trouble his sensitive conscience—this was before his pamphlet Richard Wagner in Bayreuth—and his notebooks of that period were sown with question-marks. In the interesting correspondence with Dr. Georg Brandes, who literally revealed to Europe the genius of Nietzsche, we find this significant passage:

> I was the first to distil a sort of unity out of the two [Schopenhauer and Wagner]. . . . All the Wagnerians are disciples of Schopenhauer. Things were different when I was young. Then it was the last of the Hegelians who clung to Wagner, and "Wagner and Hegel" was still the cry in the '50s.

Nietzsche might have added the name of the philosopher Feuerbach. Wagner's English apologist, Ashton Ellis, re-

pudiates the common belief that Wagner refashioned the latter part of the Ring so as to introduce in it his newly acquired Schopenhauerian ideas. Wagner was always a pessimist, declares Mr. Ellis; Schopenhauer but confirmed him in his theories. Wagner, like Nietzsche, was too often a weathercock. A second-rate poet and philosopher, he stands chiefly for his magnificent music. Nietzsche or any other *polemiker* cannot change the map of music by fulminating against Wagner. Time may prove his true foe—the devouring years that always show such hostility to music of the theatre, music that is not pure music.

The spirit of the letter to Brandes quoted above may be found in Nietzsche Contra Wagner (The Case of Wagner, page 72). Nietzsche wrote:

> I similarly interpreted Wagner's music in my own way as the expression of a Dionysian powerfulness of soul. . . . It is obvious what I misunderstood, it is obvious in like manner what I bestowed upon Wagner and Schopenhauer—myself.

He read his own enthusiasms, his Hellenic ideals, into the least Greek among composers. Wagner himself was at first pleased, also not a little nonplussed by the idolatry of Nietzsche. Remember that this young philologist was a musician as well as a brilliant scholar.

Following Schopenhauer in his main contention that music is a presentative, not a representative art; the noumenon, not the phenomenon—as are, for instance, painting and sculpture—Nietzsche held that the unity of music is undeniable. There is no dualism, such as instrumental music and vocal music. Sung music is only music presented by a sonorous vocal organ; the words are negligible. A poem may be a starting-point for the composer, yet in poetry there is not the potentiality of tone (this does not naturally refer to the literary tone-quality of music). From a non-musical thing music cannot be evolved. There

is only absolute music. Its beginning is absolute. All other is a masquerading. The dramatic singer is a monstrosity—the actual words of Nietzsche. Opera is a debased genre. We almost expect the author to deny, as denied Hanslick, music any content whatsoever. But this he does not. He is too much the Romantic. For him the poem of Tristan was but the "vapor" of the music.

Music is the archetype of the arts. It is the essence of Greek tragedy and therefore pessimistic. Tragedy is pessimism. The two faces of the Greek art he calls the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses. One is the Classic, the other the Romantic; calm beauty as opposed to bacchantic ecstasy. Wagner, Nietzsche identified with the Dionysian element, and he was not far wrong; but Greek? The passionate welter of this new music stirred Nietzsche's excitable young nerves. He was, like many of his contemporaries, swept away in the boiling flood of the Wagnerian sea. It appeared to him, the profound Greek scholar, as a recrudescence of Dionysian joy. Instead, it was the topmost crest of the dying waves of Romanticism. Nietzsche later realized this fact. To Brandes he wrote:

> Your German romanticism has made me reflect how the whole movement only attained its goal in music (Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, Wagner, Brahms); in literature it stopped short with a huge promise—the French were more fortunate. I am afraid I am too much of a musician not to be a Romanticist. Without music life would be a mistake. . . . With regard to the effect of Tristan I could tell you strange things. A good dose of mental torture strikes me as an excellent tonic before a meal of Wagner.

Nietzsche loved Wagner the man more than Wagner the musician. The news of Wagner's death in 1883 was a terrible blow for him. He wrote Frau Wagner a letter of condolence, which was answered from Bayreuth by her daughter Daniela von Bülow. (See the newly published Overbeck Letters.)

Nothing could be more unfair than to ascribe to Nietzsche petty motives in his breaking off with Wagner. There were minor differences, but it was Parsifal and its drift toward Rome, that shocked the former disciple. What he wrote of Wagner and Wagnerism may be interpreted according to one's own views, but the Parsifal criticism is sound. That parody of the Roman Catholic ceremonial and ideas, and the glorification of its psychopathic hero, with the consequent degradation of the idea of womanhood, Nietzsche saw and denounced. "I despise every one who does not regard Parsifal as an outrage on morals," he cried. To-day his denunciations are recognized by wise folk as wisdom. He first heard Carmen in Genoa, November 27, 1881. To his exacerbated nerves its rich southern melodies were soothing. He overpraised the opera—which is a sparkling compound of Gounod and Spanish gypsy airs; an *olla podrida* as regards style. He knew that this was bonbon music compared with Wagner. And the confession was wrung from his lips: "We must first be Wagnerians." Thus, as he escaped from Schopenhauer's pessimism, he plucked from his heart his affection for Wagner. He had become Zarathustra. He painted Wagner as an "ideal monster," but the severing of the friendship cost Nietzsche his happiness. An extraordinary mountain-mania attacked him on the heights of the upper Engadine. All that he had once admired he now hated. He had a positive genius for hatred, even more so than Huysmans; both writers were bilious melancholics, and both were alike in the display of heavy-handed irony. With Nietzsche's "ears for quarter tones"—as he told Brandes—it would have been far better for him to have remained with Peter Gast in Italy, while the latter was writing that long-contemplated study on Chopin. Nietzsche loved the music of the Pole who had introduced into the heavy monochrome of German harmonies an exotic and chromatic gamut of colors.

If Wagner erred in his belief that it was the drama not the music which ruled in his own compositions (for his talk about the welding of the different arts is an æsthetic nightmare), why should not Nietzsche have made a mistake in ascribing to Wagner his own exalted ideals? Wagner's *music* is the Wagner music drama. That is a commonplace of criticism—though not at Bayreuth. Nietzsche taught the supremacy of tone in his early book. He detested so-called musical realism. These two men became friends through a series of mutual misunderstandings. When Nietzsche discovered that music and philosophy had naught in common—and he had hoped that Wagner's would prove the solvent—he cooled off in his faith. It was less an apostasy than we believe. Despite his eloquent affirmation of Wagnerism, Nietzsche was never in his innermost soul a Wagnerian. Nor yet was he insincere. This may seem paradoxical. He had felt the "pull" of Wagner's genius and, as in the case of his Schopenhauer worship, he temporarily lost his critical bearings. This accounts for his bitterness when he found the feet of his idol to be of clay. He was lashing his own bare soul in each scarifying phrase he applied to Wagner. He saw the free young Siegfried become the old Siegfried in the manacles of determinism and pessimism; then followed Parsifal and Wagner's apostasy —Nietzsche believed Wagner was going back to Christianity. There is more consistency in the case of Friedrich Nietzsche than has been acknowledged by the Wagnerians. He, the philosopher of decadence and romanticism, could have said to Wagner as Baudelaire to Manet: "You are only the first in the decrepitude of your art."

If Nietzsche considered the poem a vaporous background for the passionate musical mosaic of Tristan and Isolde, what would he have thought if he could have heard the tonal interpretation of his Also Sprach Zarathustra, as conceived by the mathematical and emotional brain of

Richard Strauss? I recall the eagerness with which I asked an impossible question of Frau Foerster-Nietzsche when at the Nietzsche-Archive, Weimar, in 1904: Is this tone-poem by Richard Strauss truly Nietzschean? Her tact did not succeed in quite veiling a hint of dubiety, though the noble sister of the dead philosopher was too tender-hearted to suggest a formal criticism of the composer's imposing sound-palace. It is not, however, difficult to imagine Nietzsche, alive, glaring in dismay and with "embellished indignation" as he hears the dance theme in Zarathustra. Nor would he be less surprised if he had suddenly forced upon his consciousness a performance of Claude Debussy's mooning, mystic, *triste* Pélléas et Mélisande, with its invertebrate charm, its innocuous sensuousness, its absence of thematic material, its perverse harmonies, its lack of rhythmic variety, and its faded sweetness, like that evoked by musty, quaint tapestry in languid motion. (Debussy might have delved deeper into churchly modes and for novelty's sake even employed *pneumes* to lend his score a still more venerable aspect. Certainly his tonalities are on the other side of diatonic and chromatic. Why not call them *pneumatic* scales?) Surely Nietzsche could not have refrained from exclaiming: Ah! the pathos of distance! Ah! what musical sins thou must take upon thee, Richard Wagner! Strauss and Debussy are the legitimate fruits of thy evil tree of music!

Miserably happy poet, like one of those Oriental wonder-workers dancing in ecstasy on white-hot sword-blades, the tears all the while streaming down his cheeks as he proclaims his new gospel of joy: "*Il faut mediterraniser la musique.*" Alas! the pathos of Nietzsche's reality. Reality for this self-tortured Hamlet-soul was a spiritual crucifixion and a spiritual tragedy.

III

ANTICHRIST?

The penalty of misrepresentation and misinterpretation seems to be attached to every new idea that comes to birth through the utterances of genius. At first with Wagner it was the "noise-making Wagner"—whereas he is a master of plangent harmonies. Ibsen, we were told, couldn't write a play. His dramatic technic is nearly faultless; in reality, with its unities there is a suspicion of the academic in it and a perilous approach to the Chinese ivory mechanism of Scribe. And paint, Paris asserted, the late Edouard Manet could not. It is precisely his almost miraculous manipulation of paint that sets this artist apart from his fellows. The same tactless rating of Friedrich Nietzsche has prevailed in the general critical and popular imagination. Nietzsche has become the bugaboo of timid folk. He has been denounced as the Antichrist; yet he has been the subject of a discriminating study in such a conservative magazine as the *Catholic World*. Thanks to the conception of some writers, Nietzsche and the Nietzscheans are gigantic brutes, a combination of Genghis Khan and Bismarck, terrifying apparitions wearing mustachios like yataghans, eyes rolling in frenzy, with a philosophy that ranges from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter, and with a consuming atheism as a side attraction. Need we protest that this is Nietzsche misread, Nietzsche butchered to make a stupid novelist's holiday?

Ideas to be vitally effective must, like scenery, be run on during the exact act of the contemporary drama. The aristocratic individualism of Nietzsche came at a happy moment when the stage was bare yet encumbered with the débris of socialistic theories left over from the storm that first swept all Europe in 1848. It was necessary that the

pendulum should swing in another direction. The small voice of Max Stirner—who, as the French would say, imitated Nietzsche in advance—was swallowed in the universal gabble of sentimental humanitarianism preached from pulpits and barricades. Nietzsche's appearance marked one of those precise psychological moments when the rehabilitation of an old idea in a new garment of glittering rhetoric would resemble a new dispensation. For over a decade now the fame and writings of the Saxon-born philosopher have traversed the intellectual life of the Continent. He was translated into a dozen languages, he was expounded, schools sprang up and his disciples fought furious battles in his name. His doctrines, because of their dynamic revolutionary quality, were impudently annexed by men whose principles would have been abhorrent to the unfortunate thinker. Nietzsche, who his life long had attacked socialism in its myriad shapes, was captured by the socialists. However, the regression of the wave of admiration has begun not only in Germany but in France, once his greatest stronghold. The real Nietzsche, undimmed by violent partisanship and equally violent antagonism, has emerged. No longer is he a bogey man, not a creature of blood and iron, not a constructive or an academic philosopher, but simply a brilliant and suggestive thinker who, because of the nature of his genius, could never have erected an elaborate philosophic system, and a writer not quite as dangerous to established religion and morals as some critics would have us believe. He most prided himself on his common sense, on his "realism," as contradistinguished from the cobweb-spinning idealisms of his philosophic predecessors.

Early in 1908 a book was published at Jena entitled Franz Overbeck and Friedrich Nietzsche, by Carl Albrecht Bernouilli. In it at great length and with clearness was described the friendship of Overbeck—a well-known church historian and culture-novelist, born at St. Petersburg of

German and English parents—and Nietzsche during their Basel period. Interesting is the story of his relations with Richard Wagner and Jacob Burckhardt, the historian of the Renaissance. As a youth Nietzsche had won the praises of both Rietschl and Burckhardt for his essay on Theognis. This was before 1869, in which year at the age of twenty-six he took his doctor's degree and accepted the chair of classical philology at Basel. His friend Overbeck noted his dangerously rapid intellectual development and does not fail to record, what has never been acknowledged by the dyed-in-the-wool Nietzscheans, that the "Master" had read and inwardly digested Max Stirner's anarchistic work, The Ego and His Own. Not only is this long-denied fact set forth, but Overbeck, in a careful analysis, reaches the positive conclusion that, notwithstanding his profound erudition, his richly endowed nature, Friedrich Nietzsche is not one of the world's great men; that in his mad endeavor to carve himself into the semblance of his own Superman he wrecked brain and body.

The sad irony of this book lies in the fact that the sister of Nietzsche, Frau Foerster-Nietzsche, who nursed the poet-philosopher from the time of his breakdown in 1888 till his death in 1900; who for twenty years has by pen and personally made such a successful propaganda for his ideas, was in at least three letters—for the first time published by Bernouilli—insulted grievously by her brother. This posthumous hatred as expressed in the acrid prose of Nietzsche is terribly disenchanting. He calls her a meddlesome woman without a particle of understanding of his ideals. He declares that she martyred him, made him ridiculous, and in the last letter he wrote her, dated December, 1886, he wonders at the enigma of fate that made two persons of such different temperaments blood-relatives. Bernouilli, the editor of these Overbeck letters, adds insult to injury by calling the unselfish, noble-minded sister and biographer of

her brother a tyrannical and not very intellectual person, who often wounded her brother with her advice and criticism.

Peter Gast doubts the authenticity of these letters, for, as he truthfully points out, the love of Nietzsche for his sister, as evidenced by an ample correspondence, was great. We recall the touching exclamation of the sick philosopher when once at his sister's house in Weimar he saw her weeping: "Don't cry, little sister, we are all so happy now." That "now" had a sinister significance, for the brilliant thinker was quite helpless and incapable of reading through the page of a book, though he was never the lunatic pictured by some of his opponents. A deep melancholy had settled upon his soul and he died without enjoying the light of a returned reason. It has not occurred to German critics that these letters even if genuine are the product of a diseased imagination. Nietzsche became a very suspicious man after his break with Wagner. He suffered from the mania of persecution. He hated mankind and fled to the heights of Sils-Maria to escape what Poe aptly described as the "tyranny of the human face."

The first thing that occurs to one after reading Beyond Good and Evil is that Nietzsche is more French than German. It is well known that his favorites were the *pensée* writers, Pascal, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Fontenelle, Chamfort, Vauvenargues. A peripatetic because of chronic ill health—he had the nerves of a Shelley and the stomach of a Carlyle—his ideas were jotted down during his long walks in the Engadine. Naturally they assumed the form of aphorisms, epigrams, *jeux d'esprit*. With his increasing illness came the inability to write more than a few pages of connected thoughts. His best period was between the years 1877 and 1882. He had attacked Schopenhauer; he wished to be free to go up to the "heights" unimpeded by the baggage of other men's ideas. It was with disquietude that his

friends witnessed the growing self-exaltation that may be noted in the rhapsodical Zarathustra.

He felt the ground sinking under him—his pride of intellect Luciferian in intensity—and his latter works were a desperate challenge to his darkening brain and the world that refused to recognize his value.

Nietzsche had the true ascetic's temperament. He lived the life of a strenuous saint, and his Beyond Good and Evil might land us in a barren desert, where austerity would rule our daily conduct. To become a Superman one must renounce the world. It was the easy-going, down-at-the-heel morality of the world, its carrying water on both shoulders, that stirred the wrath of this earnest man of blameless life and provoked from him so much brilliant and fascinating prose. He wrote a swift, golden German. He was a stylist. The great culture hero of his day, nourished on Latin and Greek, he waged war against the moral ideas of his generation and ruined his intellect in the unequal conflict. He turned on himself and rended his soul into shreds rather than join in the affirmations of recognized faith. Yet what eloquent, touching pages he has devoted to the founder of the Christian religion. His last signature in the letter to Brandes reveals the preoccupation of his memory with the religion he despised. Nietzsche made the great renunciation of inherited faith and committed spiritual suicide. Libraries are filled with the works of his commentators, eager to make of him what he was not. He has been shamelessly exploited. He has been called the forerunner of Pragmatism. He was a poet, an artist, who saw life as a gorgeously spun dream, not as a dreary phalanstery. He belonged rather to Goethe and Faust than to Schopenhauer or the positivists. Hellenism was his first and last love.

The correspondence between Nietzsche and his famulus, the musician Peter Gast—whose real name is Heinrich Köselitz—from 1876 to 1889, appeared last autumn and

comprises 278 letters. Another Nietzsche appears—gentle, suffering, as usual still hopeful. He loves Italy; at the end, Turin is his favorite city. There is little except in the final communication to show a mind cracking asunder. No doubt this correspondence was given to the world as an offset to the Overbeck-Bernouilli letters.

Leslie Stephen declared that no one ever wrote a dull autobiography, and risking a bull, added, "The very dulness would be interesting." Yet one is not afraid to maintain that Friedrich Nietzsche's autobiography is rather a disappointment; possibly because too much was expected. It should not be forgotten that Nietzsche, when at Wagner's Villa Triebschen, near Lucerne, read and corrected Wagner's autobiography, which is yet to see the light of publication. He seems to have violated certain confidences, for he was the first—that is, in latter years—to revive the story of Wagner's blood relationship to his stepfather, Ludwig Geyer. In Leipsic this was a thrice-told tale. Moreover, he warned us to be suspicious of great men's autobiographies and then wrote one himself, wrote it in three weeks, beginning October 15, 1888, the forty-fourth anniversary of his birth, and ending with difficulty November 4. It rings sincere, and was composed at white heat, but unhappily for this present curious generation of Nietzsche readers it tells very little that is new.

Notwithstanding Nietzsche's wish that the book should not exceed in price over a mark and a half, a limited edition de luxe has been put forth with the acquiescence of the Nietzsche archive, Weimar, and at a high price. This edition is limited to 1,250 copies. It is clearly printed, but the decorative element is rather bizarre. Henry Van deVelde of the Weimar Art School is the designer of the title and ornaments. Raoul Richter, professor at the Leipsic University, has written a few appreciative words at the close.

Nietzsche was at Turin, November, 1888. There he wrote

the following to Professor Georg Brandes, the celebrated Copenhagen critic: "I have now revealed myself with a cynicism that will become historical. The book is called Ecce Homo and is against everything Christian. . . . I am after all the first psychologist of Christianity, and like the old artillerist I am, I can bring forward cannon of which no opponent of Christianity has even suspected the existence. . . . I lay down my oath that in two years we shall have the whole earth in convulsions. I am a fatality. Guess who it is that comes off worst in Ecce Homo? The Germans! I have said awful things to them." This was the "golden autumn" of his life, as he confessed to his sister Elizabeth. In a little over four weeks from the date of the letter to Brandes Nietzsche went mad, after a stroke of apoplexy in Turin. The collapse must have taken place between January 1 and 3, 1889. Brandes received a card signed "The Crucified One"; Overbeck, his old friend at Basel, was also agitated by a few lines in which Nietzsche proclaimed himself the King of Kings; while to Cosima Wagner at Bayreuth was sent a communication which read, "Ariadne, I love you! Dionysos." Like Tolstoy, Nietzsche suffered from theomania and prophecy madness.

These details are not in the autobiography but may be found in Dr. Mügge's excellent study just published, Nietzsche, His Life and Work. Overbeck started for Turin and there found his poor old companion giving away his money, dancing, singing, declaiming verse, and playing snatches of crazy music on the pianoforte. He was taken back to Basel and was gentle on the trip except that in the Saint-Gothard tunnel he sang a poem of his, "An der Brücke," which appears in the autobiography. His mother brought him from Switzerland to Naumburg; thence to Dr. Binswanger's establishment at Jena. Later he lived in his sister's home at Upper Weimar, and from the balcony, where he spent his days, he could see a beautiful landscape. He was melan-

choly rather than mad, never violent—this his sister has personally assured me—and occasionally surprised those about him by flashes of memory; but full consciousness was not to be again enjoyed by him. Overwork, chloral, and despair at the "conspiracy of silence" caused his brain to crumble. He had attained his "Great Noon," Zarathustra's Noon, during the closing days of 1888. In August, 1900, came the euthanasia for which he had longed.

There is internal evidence that the autobiography was written under exalted nervous conditions. The aura of insanity hovers about its pages. Yet Nietzsche has seldom said so many brilliant, ironical, and savage things. He melts over memories of Wagner, the one friendship of a life crowded with friends and cursed by solitude. He sets out to smash Christianity, but he expressed the hope that the book would fall into the hands of the intellectual élite. He divides his theme into the following heads: Why I Am So Clever: Why I Am So Sage: Why I Write Such Good Books: Why I Am a Fatality. (You recall here the letter to Brandes.) He ranges from the abuse of bad German cookery to Kantian metaphysics. He calls Ibsen the typical old maid and denounces him as the creator of the "Emancipated Woman." Yes, he does insult Germany and the Germans, but no worse than in earlier books; and certainly not so effectively as did Goethe, Heine, and Schopenhauer. In calling the Germans the "Chinese of Europe" he but repeated the words of Goncourt in Charles Demailly. He speaks of Liszt as one "who surpasses all musicians by the noble accents of his orchestration" (vague phrase); and depreciates Schumann's "Manfred." He, Nietzsche, had composed a counter overture which Von Bülow declared extraordinary. True, Von Bülow did call it something of the sort, with the advice to throw it into the dust-bin as being an insult to good music. He analyzes his recent readings of Baudelaire—whose diary touched him deeply—of Stend-

hal, Bourget, Maupassant, Anatole France, and others. Best of all, he minutely analyzes the mental processes of his books from The Birth of Tragedy to The Wagner Case. He declares Zarathustra a dithyramb of solitude and purity, and proudly boasts that the Superman builds his nest in the trees of the future.

What a master of invective! He often descends to the street in his tongue-lashing, as, for instance, when he groups "shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats." Woman is always the enemy. The only way to tame her is to make her a mother. As for female suffrage, he sets it down to psychological disorders. He is a *nuance,* and is the first German to understand women! Alas! And not the last man who will repeat his speech surely hailing from the Stone Age. He seems rather proud of his double personality, and hints at a third. Oddly enough, Nietzsche asked that his Ecce Homo (the title proves his constant preoccupation with Christianity) be translated into French by Strindberg, the Swedish poet and the first dramatist to incorporate into his plays the Nietzschean philosophy, or what he conceived to be such. (Daniel Lesueur has written of the various adaptations for gorillas of a teaching that really demands from man the utmost that is in him.) Nietzsche was a hater of Christianity; above all of Christian morals, but he was a brave and honest fighter. He raged at George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, and Carlyle for their half-heartedness. To give up the belief in Christ and His mission meant for Nietzsche to drop the moral system, to transvalue old moral values. This, he truthfully asserted, George Eliot and Spencer had not the courage to do. He did not skulk behind such masks as the Higher Criticism, Modernism, or quacksalver Christian socialism. Compromise was abhorrent to him. His Superman, with its echoes of Wagner's Siegfried, Ibsen's Brand, Stendhal's wicked heroes, the Renaissance Borgias, the sec-

ond Faust of Goethe, and not a little of Hamlet, is a monster of perfection that may some day become a demigod for a new religion—and no worse than contemporary mud-gods manufactured daily. Nietzsche's particular virtue, even for the orthodox, is that though he assails their faith he also puts to rout with the fiery blasts of his rhetoric all the belly-gods, the false-culture gods, the gods who "heal," and other "ghosts"—as Max Stirner calls them. But to every generation its truths (or lies).

A recently published anecdote of Ibsen quotes a statement of his *apropos* of Brand. "The whole drama is only meant as irony. For the man who wants all or nothing is certainly crazy." Well, Friedrich Nietzsche was such a man. No half-way parleyings. Fight the Bogey. Don't go around. He went more serenely than did Brand to his ice cathedral on the heights. His prayer uttered years before came true: "Give me, ye gods, give me madness! Madness to make me believe at last in myself."

Nietzsche is the most dynamically emotional writer of his times. He sums up an epoch. He is the expiring voice of the old nineteenth-century romanticism in philosophy. His message to unborn generations we may easily leave to those unborn, and enjoy the wit, the profound criticisms of life, the bewildering gamut of his ideas; above all, pity the tragic blotting out of such a vivid intellectual life.

XII

IBSEN

I

Henrik Ibsen was the best-hated artist of the nineteenth century. The reason is simple: He was, himself, the arch-hater of his age. Yet, granting this, the Norwegian dramatist aroused in his contemporaries a wrath that would have been remarkable even if emanating from the fiery pit of politics; in the comparatively serene field of æsthetics such overwhelming attacks from the critics of nearly every European nation testified to the singular power displayed by this poet. Richard Wagner was not so abused; the theatre of his early operations was confined to Germany, the Tannhäuser fiasco in Paris a unique exception. Wagner, too, did everything that was possible to provoke antagonism. He scored his critics in speech and pamphlet. He gave back as hard names as he received. Ibsen never answered, either in print or by the mouth of friends, the outrageous allegations brought against him. Indeed, his disciples often darkened the issue by their unsolicited, uncritical championship.

In Edouard Manet, the revolutionary Parisian painter and head of the so-called impressionist movement—himself not altogether deserving the appellation—we have an analogous case to Wagner's. Ridicule, calumny, vituperation, pursued him for many years. But Paris was the principal scene of his struggles; Paris mocked him, not all Europe. Even the indignation aroused by Nitezsche was a comparatively local affair. Wagner is the only man who approaches Ibsen in the massiveness of his martyrdom. Yet Wagner had consolations for his opponents. His music-drama, so

rich in color and rhythmic beauty, his romantic themes, his appeal to the eye, his friendship with Ludwig of Bavaria, at times placated his fiercest detractors. Manet painted one or two successes for the official Salon; Nietzsche's brilliant style and faculty for coining poetic images were acclaimed, his philosophy declared detestable. Yes, fine phrases may make fine psychologues. Robert Browning never felt the heavy hand of public opinion as did Ibsen. We must go back to the days of Byron and Shelley for an example of such uncontrollable and unanimous condemnation. But, again, Ibsen tops them all as victim of storms that blew from every quarter: Norway to Austria, England to Italy, Russia to America. There were no mitigating circumstances in his *lèse-majesté* against popular taste. No musical rhyme, scenic splendor, or rhythmic prose acted as an emotional buffer between him and his audiences. His social dramas were condemned as the sordid, heartless productions of a mediocre poet, who wittingly debased our moral currency. And as they did not offer as bribes the amatory intrigue, the witty dialogue, the sensual arabesques of the French stage, or the stilted rhetoric and heroic postures of the German, they were assailed from every critical watch-tower in Europe. Ibsen was a stranger, Ibsen was disdainfully silent, therefore Ibsen must be annihilated. Possibly if he had, like Wagner, explained his dramas, we should have had confusion thrice confounded.

The day after his death the entire civilized world wrote of him as the great man he was: great man, great artist, great moralist. And A Doll's House only saw the light in 1879—so potent a creator of critical perspective is Death. There were, naturally, many dissonant opinions in this symphony of praise. Yet how different it all read from the opinions of a decade ago. Adverse criticism, especially in America, was vitiated by the fact that Ibsen the dramatist was hardly known here. Ibsen was eagerly read, but sel-

dom played; and rarely played as he should be. He is first the dramatist. His are not closet dramas to be leisurely digested by lamplight; conceived for the theatre, actuality their key-note, his characters are pale abstractions on the printed page—not to mention the inevitable distortions to be found in the closest translation. We are all eager to tell what we think of him. But do we know him? Do we know him as do the playgoers of Berlin, or St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Vienna, or Munich? And do we realize his technical prowess? In almost every city of Europe Ibsen is in the regular repertory. He is given at intervals with Shakespeare, Schiller, Dumas, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Grillparzer, Hervieu, Sudermann, and with the younger dramatists. That is the true test. Not the isolated divinity of a handful of worshippers, with an esoteric message, his plays are interpreted by skilled actors and not for the untrained if enthusiastic amateur. There is no longer Ibsenism on the Continent; Ibsen is recognized as the greatest dramatist since Racine and Molière. Cults claim him no more, and therefore the critical point of view at the time of his death had entirely shifted. His works are played in every European language and have been translated into the Japanese.

The mixed blood in the veins of Ibsen may account for his temperament; he was more Danish than Norwegian, and there were German and Scotch strains in his ancestry. Such obscure forces of heredity doubtless played a rôle in his career. Norwegian in his love of freedom, Danish in his artistic bent, his philosophic cast of mind was wholly Teutonic. Add to these a possible theologic prepossession derived from the Scotch, a dramatic technic in which Scribe and Sophocles are not absent, and we have to deal with a disquieting problem. Ibsen was a mystery to his friends and foes. Hence the avidity with which he is claimed by idealists, realists, socialists, anarchists, symbolists, by

evangelical folk, and by agnostics. There were in him many contradictory elements. Denounced as a pessimist, all his great plays have, notwithstanding, an unmistakable message of hope, from Brand to When We Dead Awake. An idealist he is, but one who has realized the futility of dreams; like all world-satirists, he castigates to purify. His realism is largely a matter of surfaces, and if we care to look we may find the symbol lodged in the most prosaic of his pieces. His anarchy consists in a firm adherence to the doctrine of individualism; Emerson and Thoreau are of his spiritual kin. In both there is the contempt for mob-rule, mob-opinion; for both the minority is the true rational unit; and with both there is a certain aloofness from mankind. Yet we do not denounce Emerson or Thoreau as enemies of the people. To be candid, Ibsen's belief in the rights of the individual is rather naïve and antiquated, belonging as it does to the tempestuous period of '48. Max Stirner was far in advance of the playwright in his political and menacing egoism; while Nietzsche, who loathed democracy, makes Ibsen's aristocracy timid by comparison.

Ibsen can hardly be called a philosophic anarch, for the body of doctrine, either political or moral, deducible from his plays is so perplexing by reason of its continual affirmation and negation, so blurred by the kaleidoscopic clash of character, that one can only fuse these mutually exclusive qualities by realizing him as a dramatist who has created a microcosmic world; in a word, we must look upon the man as a creator of dramatic character, not as a theorist. And his characters have all the logical illogicality of life.

Several traits emerge from this welter of cross-purposes and action. Individualism is a leading motive from the first to the last play; a strong sense of moral responsibility —an oppressive sense, one is tempted to add—is blended with a curious flavor of Calvinism, in which are traces of predestination. A more singular equipment for a modern

dramatist is barely conceivable. Soon we discover that Ibsen is playing with the antique dramatic counters under another name. Free-will and determinism—what are these but the very breath of classic tragedy! In one of his rare moments of expansion he said: "Many things and much upon which my later work has turned—the contradiction between endowment and desire, between capacity and will, at once the entire tragedy and comedy of mankind—may here be dimly discerned." Moral responsibility evaded is a favorite theme of his. No Furies of the Greek drama pursued their victims with such relentless vengeance as pursues the unhappy wretches of Ibsen. In Ghosts, the old scriptural wisdom concerning the sins of parents is vividly expounded, though the heredity doctrine is sadly overworked. As in other plays of his, there were false meanings read into the interpretation; the realism of Ghosts is negligible; the symbol looms large in every scene. Search Ibsen throughout and it will be found that his subject-matter is fundamentally the same as that of all great masters of tragedy. It is his novel manner of presentation, his transposition of themes hitherto treated epically, to the narrow, unheroic scale of middle-class family life that blinded critics to his true significance. This tuning down of the heroic, this reversal of the old æsthetic order extorted bitter remonstrances. If we kill the ideal in art and life, what have we left? was the cry. But Ibsen attacks false as well as true ideals and does not always desert us after stripping us of our self-respect. A poet of doubt he is, who seldom attempts a solution; but he is also a puritan—a positivist puritan—and his scourgings are an equivalent for that *katharsis,* in the absence of which Aristotle denied the title of tragedy.

Consider, then, how Ibsen was misunderstood. Setting aside the historical and poetic works, we are confronted in the social plays by the average man and woman of every-

day life. They live, as a rule, in mediocre circumstances; they are harried by the necessities of quotidian existence. Has this undistinguished *bourgeoisie* the potentialities of romance, of tragedy, of beauty? Wait, says Ibsen, and you will see your own soul, the souls of the man and woman who jostle you in the street, the same soul in palace or hovel, that orchestra of cerebral sensations, the human soul. And it is the truth he speaks. We follow with growing uneasiness his exposition of a soul. The spectacle is not pleasing. In his own magical but charmless way the souls of his people are turned inside out during an evening. No monologues, no long speeches, no familiar machinery of the drama, are employed. But the miracle is there. You face yourself. Is it any wonder that public and critic alike waged war against this showman of souls, this new psychologist of the unflattering, this past master of disillusionment? For centuries poets, tragic and comic, satiric and lyric, have been exalting, teasing, mocking, and lulling mankind. When Aristophanes flayed his victims he sang a merry tune; Shakespeare, with Olympian amiability, portrayed saint and sinner alike to the accompaniment of a divine music. But Ibsen does not cajole, amuse, or bribe with either just or specious illusions. He is determined to tell the truth of our microcosmic baseness. The truth is his shibboleth. And when enounced its sound is not unlike the chanting of a *Nox Irae*.. He lifted the ugly to heroic heights; the ignoble he analyzed with the cold ardor of a moral biologist—the ignoble, that "sublime of the lower slopes," as Flaubert has it.

This psychological method was another rock of offense. Why transform the playhouse into a school of metaphysics? But Ibsen is not a metaphysician and his characters are never abstractions; instead, they are very lively humans. They offend those who believe the theatre to be a place of sentimentality or clowning; these same Ibsen men

and women offend the lovers of Shakespeare and the classics. We know they are real, yet we dislike them as we dislike animals trained to imitate humanity too closely. The simian gestures cause a feeling of repulsion in both cases; surely *we* are not of such stock! And we move away. So do we sometimes turn from the Ibsen stage when human souls are made to go through a series of sorrowful evolutions by their stern trainer. To what purpose such revelations? Is it art? Is not our ideal of a nobler humanity shaken?

Ibsen's report of the human soul as he sees it is his right, the immemorial right of priest, prophet, or artist. All our life is a huge lie if this right be denied; from the Preacher to Schopenhauer, from Æschylus to Molière, the man who reveals, in parable or as in a mirror, the soul of his fellow-being is a man who is a benefactor of his kind, if he be not a cynical spirit that denies. Ibsen is a satirist of a superior degree; he has the gift of creating a *Weltspiegel* in which we see the shape of our souls. He is never the cynic, though he has portrayed the cynic in his plays. He has too much moral earnestness to view the world merely as a vile jest. That he is an artist is acknowledged. And for the ideals dear to us which he so savagely attacks, he so clears the air about some old familiar, mist-haunted ideal of duty, that we wonder if we have hitherto mistaken its meaning.

From being denounced as a corrupter of youth, an anarch of letters, a debaser of current moral coin, we have learned to view him as a force making for righteousness, as a master of his craft, and as a creator of a large gallery of remarkably vivid human characters. We know now that many modern dramatists have carried their pails to this vast northern lake and from its pine-hemmed and sombre waters have secretly drawn sparkling inspiration.

The truth is that Ibsen can be no longer denied—we exclude the wilfully blind—by critic or public. He is too big

a man to be locked up in a library as if he were full of vague forbidden wickedness. When competently interpreted he is never offensive; the scenes to which the critics refer as smacking of sex are mildness itself compared to the doings of Sardou's lascivious marionettes. In the theatrical sense his are not sex plays, as are those of Dumas the younger. He discusses woman as a social as well as a psychical problem. Any picture of love is tolerated so it be frankly sentimental; but let Ibsen mention the word sex and there is a call to arms by the moral policemen of the drama. Thus, by some critical hocus-pocus the world was led for years to believe that this lofty thinker, moralist, and satirist concealed an immoral teacher. It is an old trick of the enemy to place upon an author's shoulders the doings and sayings of his mimic people. Ibsen was fathered with all the sins of his characters. Instead of being studied from life, they were, so many averred, the result of a morbid brain, the brain of a pessimist and a hater of his kind.

We have seen that Ibsen offended by his disregard of academic dramatic attitudes. His personages are ordinary, yet like Browning's meanest soul they have a human side to show us. The inherent stuff of his plays is tragic; but the hero and heroine do not stamp, stalk, or spout blank verse; it is the tragedy of life without the sop of sentiment usually administered by second-rate poets. Missing the color and decoration, the pretty music, and the eternal simper of the sensual, we naturally turn our back on such a writer. If he knows souls, he certainly does not understand the box-office. This for the negative side. On the positive, the apparent baldness of the narrative, the ugliness of his men and women, their utterance of ideas foreign to cramped, convention-ridden lives, mortify us immeasurably. The tale always ends badly or sadly. And when one of his characters begins to talk about the "joy of life," it is the gloom of life that is evoked. The women—

and here is the shock to our masculine vanity—the women assert themselves too much, telling men that they are not what they believe themselves to be. Lastly, the form of the Ibsen play is compact with ideas and emotion. We usually don't go to the theatre to think or to feel. With Ibsen we must think, and think closely; we must feel—worse still, be thrilled to our marrow by the spectacle of our own spiritual skeletons. No marvellous music is there to heal the wounded nerves as in Tristan and Isolde; no prophylactic for the merciless acid of the dissector. We either breathe a rarefied atmosphere in his Brand and in When We Dead Awake, or else, in the social drama, the air is so dense with the intensity of the closely wrought moods that we gasp as if in the chamber of a diving-bell. Human, all too human!

Protean in his mental and spiritual activities, a hater of shams—religious, political, and social shams—more symbolist than realist, in assent with Goethe that no material is unfit for poetic treatment, the substance of Ibsen's morality consists in his declaration that men to be free must first free themselves. Once, in addressing a group of Norwegian workmen, he told them that man must ennoble himself, he must *will* himself free; "to will is to have to will," as he says in Emperor and Galilean. Yet in Peer Gynt he declares "to be oneself is to slay oneself." Surely all this is not very radical. He wrote to Georg Brandes, that the State was the foe of the individual; therefore the State must go. But the revolution must be one of the spirit. Ibsen ever despised socialism, and after his mortification over the fiasco of the Paris Commune he had never a good word for that vain legend: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Brandes relates that while Ibsen wished—in one of his poems—to place a torpedo under the social ark, there was also a time when he longed to use the knout on the willing slaves of a despised social system.

Perhaps the main cause of Ibsen's offending is his irony. The world forgives much, irony never, for irony is the ivory tower of the intellectual, the last refuge of the original. It is not the intellectual irony of Meredith, nor the playful irony of Anatole France, but a veiled corrosive irony that causes you to tread suspiciously every yard of his dramatic domain. The "second intention," the secondary dialogue, spoken of by Maeterlinck, in the Ibsen plays is very disconcerting to those who prefer their drama free from enigma. Otherwise his dialogue is a model for future dramatists. It is clarity itself and, closely woven, it has the characteristic accents of nature. Read, we feel its gripping logic; spoken by an actor, it tingles with vitality.

For the student there is a fascination in the cohesiveness of these dramas. Ibsen's mind was like a lens; it focussed the refracted, scattered, and broken lights of opinions and theories of his day upon the contracted space of his stage. In a fluid state the ideas that crystallized in his prose series are to be found in his earliest work; there is a remorseless fastening of link to link in the march-like movement of his plays. Their author seems to delight in battering down in Ghosts what he had preached in A Doll's House; The Enemy of the People exalted the individual man, though Ghosts taught that a certain kind of personal liberty is deadly; The Wild Duck, which follows, is another puzzle, for in it the misguided idealist is pilloried for destroying homes by his truth-telling, dangerous tongue; Rosmersholm follows with its portrayal of lonely souls; and the danger of filling old bottles with the fermenting wines of new ideas is set forth; in The Lady from the Sea free-will, the will to love, is lauded, though Rebekka West and Rosmersholm perished because of their exercise of this same will; Hedda Gabler shows the converse of Hilda Wangel's "will to power." Hedda is a creature wholly alive and shocking. Ibsen stuns us again, for if it is healthy to be individual and to lead

your own life, in neurasthenic Hedda's case it leads to a catastrophe which wrecks a household. This game of contradiction is continued in The Master-Builder, a most potent exposition of human motives. Solness is sick-brained because of his loveless egoism. Hilda Wangel, the "younger generation," a Hedda Gabler *à rebours,* that he so feared would come knocking at his door, awakens in him his dead dreams, arouses his slumbering self; curiously enough, if the ordinary standards of success be adduced, he goes to his destruction when he again climbs the dizzy spire. In John Gabriel Borkman the allegory is clearer. Sacrificing love to a base ambition, to "commercialism," Borkman at the close of his great and miserable life discovers that he has committed the one unpardonable offense: he has slain the love-life in the woman he loved, and for the sake of gold. So he is a failure, and, like Peer Gynt, he is ready for the Button-Moulder with his refuse-heap, who lies in wait for all cowardly and incomplete souls. The Epilogue returns to the mountains, the Ibsen symbol of freedom, and there we learn for the last time that love is greater than art, that love is life. And the dead of life awake.

The immorality of these plays is so well concealed that only abnormal moralists detect it. It may be admitted that Ibsen, like Shakespeare, manifests a preference for the man who fails. What is new is the art with which this idea is developed. The Ibsen play begins where other plays end. The form is the "amplified catastrophe" of Sophocles. After marriage the curtain is rung up on the true drama of life, therefore marriage is a theme which constantly preoccupies this modern poet. He regards it from all sides, asking whether "by self-surrender, self-realization may be achieved." His speech delivered once before a ladies' club at Christiania proves that he is not a champion of latter-day woman's rights. "The women will solve the question of mankind, but they must do so as mothers." Yet Nora

Helmer, when she slammed the door of her doll's home, caused an echo in the heart of every intelligent woman in Christendom. It is not necessary now to ask whether a woman would, or should, desert her children; Nora's departure was only the symbol of her liberty, the gesture of a newly awakened individuality. Ibsen did not preach—as innocent persons of both sexes and all anti-Ibsenites believe—that woman should throw overboard her duties; this is an absurd construction. As well argue that the example of Othello must set jealous husbands smothering their wives. A Doll's House enacted has caused no more evil than Othello. It was the plea for woman as a human being, neither more nor less than man, which the dramatist made. Our withers must have been well wrung, for it aroused a whirlwind of wrath, and henceforth the house-key became the symbol of feminine supremacy. Yet in his lovely drama of pity and resignation, Little Eyolf, the tenderest from his pen, the poet set up a counter-figure to Nora, demonstrating the duties parents owe their children.

Without exaggeration, he may be said to have discovered for the stage the modern woman. No longer the sleek cat of the drawing-room, or the bayadere of luxury, or the wild outlaw of society, the "emancipated" Ibsen woman is the sensible woman, the womanly woman, bearing a not remote resemblance to the old-fashioned woman, who calmly accepts her share of the burdens and responsibilities of life, single or wedded, though she insists on her rights as a human being, and without a touch of the heroic or the supra-sentimental. Ibsen should not be held responsible for the caricatures of womanhood evolved by his disciples. When a woman evades her responsibilities, when she is frivolous or evil, an exponent of the "life-lie" in matrimony, then Ibsen grimly paints her portrait, and we denounce him as cynical for telling the truth. And truth is seldom a welcome guest. But he knows that a fiddle can be

mended and a bell not; and in placing his surgeon-like finger on the sorest spot of our social life, he sounds this bell, and when it rings cracked he coldly announces the fact. But his attitude toward marriage is not without its mystery. In Love's Comedy his hero and heroine part, fearing the inevitable shipwreck in the union of two poetic hearts without the necessary means of a prosaic subsistence. In the later plays, marriage for gain, for home, for anything but love, brings upon its victims the severest consequences; John Gabriel Borkman, Hedda, Dora, Mrs. Alving, Allmers, Rubek, are examples. The idea of man's cruelty to man or woman, or woman's cruelty to woman or man, lashes him into a fury. Then he becomes Ibsen the Berserker.

Therefore let us beware the pitfalls dug by some Ibsen exegetists; the genius of the dramatist is too vast and versatile to be pinned down to a single formula. If you believe that he is dangerous to young people, let it be admitted —but so are Thackeray, Balzac, and Hugo. So is any strong thinker. Ibsen is a powerful dissolvent for an imagination clogged by theories of life, low ideals, and the facile materialism that exalts the letter but slays the spirit. He is a foe to compromise, a hater of the half-way, the roundabout, the weak-willed, above all, a hater of the truckling politician—he is a very Torquemada to politicians. At the best there is ethical grandeur in his conceptions, and if the moral stress is unduly felt, if he tears asunder the veil of our beloved illusions and shows us as we are, it is because of his righteous indignation against the platitudinous hypocrisy of modern life. His unvarying code is: "So to conduct one's life as to realize oneself." Withal an artist, not the evangelist of a new gospel, not the social reformer, not the exponent of science in the drama. These titles have been thrust upon him by his overheated admirers. He never posed as a prophet. He is poet, psychologist, skald,

dramatist, not always a soothsayer. The artist in him preserved him from the fate of the didactic Tolstoy. With the Russian he shares the faculty of emptying souls. Ibsen, who vaguely recalls Stendhal in his clear-eyed vision and dry irony, is without a trace of the Frenchman's cynicism or dilettantism. Like all dramatists of the first rank, the Norwegian has in him much of the seer, yet he always avoided the pontifical tone; he may be a sphinx, but he never plays the oracle. His categorical imperative, however, "All or nothing," does not bear the strain of experience. Life is simpler, is not to be lived at such an intolerable tension. The very illusions he seeks to destoy would be supplanted by others. Man exists because of his illusions. Without the "life-lie" he would perish in the mire. His illusions are his heritage from eons of ancestors. The classic view considered man as the centre of the universe; that position has been ruthlessly altered by science—we are now only tiny points of consciousness in unthinkable space. Isolated then, true children of our inconsiderable planet, we have in us traces of our predecessors. True, one may be disheartened by the pictures of unheroic meanness and petty corruption, the ill-disguised instincts of ape and tiger, in the prose plays, even to the extent of calling them—as did M. Melchior de Vogüé, Flaubert's Bouvard et Pécuchet—a grotesque Iliad of Nihilism. But we need not despair. If Ibsen seemed to say for a period, "Evil, be thou my good," his final words in the Epilogue are those of pity and peace: *Pax vobiscum!*

II

This old man with the head and electrified hair of a Schopenhauer and the torso of a giant, his temperament coinciding with his curt, imperious name, left behind him twenty-six plays, one or more in manuscript. A volume of

very subjective poems concludes this long list; among the dramas are at least three of heroic proportion and length. Ibsen was born at Skien, Norway, 1828. His forebears were Danish, German, Scotch, and Norwegian. His father, a man of means, failed in business, and at the age of eight the little Henrik had to face poverty. His schooling was of the slightest. He was not much of a classical scholar and soon he was apprenticed to an apothecary at Grimstad, the very name of which evokes a vision of gloominess. He did not prove a success as a druggist, as he spent his spare time reading and caricaturing his neighbors. His verse-making was desultory, his accustomed mien an unhappy combination of Hamlet and Byron; his misanthropy at this period recalls that of the young Schopenhauer. His favorite reading was poetry and history, and he had a predilection for sketching and conjuring tricks. It might be pointed out that here in the raw were the aptitudes of a future dramatist: poetry, pictures, illusion. In the year 1850 Ibsen published his first drama, derived from poring over Sallust and Cicero. It was a creditable effort of youth, and to the discerning it promised well for his literary future. He was gifted, without doubt, and from the first he sounded the tocsin of revolt. Pessimistic and rebellious his poems were; he had tasted misery, his home was an unhappy one—there was little love in it for him—and his earliest memories were clustered about the town jail, the hospital, and the lunatic asylum. These images were no doubt the cause of his bitter and desperate frame of mind; grinding poverty, the poverty of a third-rate provincial town in Norway, was the climax of his misery. And then, too, the scenery, rugged and noble, and the climate, depressing for months, all had their effect upon his sensitive imagination. From the start, certain conceptions of woman took root in his mind and reappear in nearly all his dramas. Catalina's wife, Aurelia, and the vestal Furia, who are re-

incarnated in the Dagny and Hjordis of his Vikings, reappear in A Doll's House, Hedda Gabler, and at the last in When We Dead Awake. One is the eternal womanly, the others the destructive feminine principle, woman the conqueror. As Catalina is a rebel against circumstances, so are Maja and the sculptor in the Epilogue of 1899. There is almost a half century of uninterrupted composition during which this group of men and women disport themselves. Brand, a poetic rather than an acting drama, is no exception; Brand and the Sheriff, Agnes and Gerda. These types are cunningly varied, their traits so concealed as to be recognized only after careful study. But the characteristics of each are alike. The monotony of this procedure is redeemed by the unity of conception—Ibsen is the reflective poet, the poet who conceives the idea and then clothes it, therein differing from Shakespeare and Goethe, to whom form and idea are simultaneously born.

In March, 1850, he went to Christiania and entered Heltberg's school as a preparation for the university. His studies were brief. He became involved in a boyish revolutionary outburst—in company with his life-long friend, the good-hearted Björnstjerne Björnson, who helped him many times—and while nothing serious occurred, it caused the young man to effervesce with literary plans and the new ideas of his times. The Warrior's Tomb, his second play, was accepted and actually performed at the Christiania theatre. The author gave up his university dreams and began to earn a rude living by his pen. He embarked in newspaper enterprises which failed. An extremist politically, he soon made a crop of enemies, the wisest crop a strong character can raise; but he often worked on an empty stomach in consequence. The metal of the man showed from the first: endure defeat, but no compromise! He went to Bergen in 1851 and was appointed theatre poet at a small salary; this comprised a travelling stipend. Ibsen saw the

Copenhagen and Dresden theatres with excellent results. His eyes were opened to the possibilities of his craft, and on his return he proved a zealous stage manager. He composed, in 1853, St. John's Night, which was played at his theatre, and in 1857 Fru Inger of Oesträtt was written. It is old-fashioned in form, but singularly life-like in characterization and fruitful in situations. The story is semi-historical. In the Lady Inger we see a foreshadowing of his strong, vengeful women. Olaf Liljekrans need not detain us. The Vikings (1858) is a sterling specimen of drama, in which legend and history are artfully blended. The Feast of Solhaug (1857) was very successful in its treatment of the saga, and is comparatively cheerful.

Ibsen left Bergen to take the position of director at the Norwegian Theatre, Christiania. He remained there until 1862, staging all manner of plays, from Shakespeare to Scribe. The value of these years was incalculable in his technical development. A poet born and by self-discipline developed, he was now master of a difficult art, an art that later he never lost, even when, weary of the conventional comedy of manners, he sought to spiritualize the form and give us the psychology of commonplace souls. It may be noted that, despite the violinist Ole Bull's generous support, the new theatre endured only five years. More than passing stress should be laid upon this formative period. His experience of these silent years was bitter, but rich in spiritual recompense. After some difficulty in securing a paltry pension from his government, Ibsen was enabled to leave Norway, which had become a charnel-house to him since the Danish war with Germany, and with his young wife he went to Rome. Thenceforth his was a gypsy career. He lived in Rome, in Dresden, in Munich, and again in Rome. He spent his summers in the Austrian Tyrol, at Sorrento, and occasionally in his own land. His was a self-imposed exile, and he did not return to Christiania to reside perma-

nently until an old but famous man. Silent, unsociable, a man of harsh moods, he was to those who knew him an upright character, an ideal husband and father. His married life had no history, a sure sign of happiness, for he was well mated. Yet one feels that, despite his wealth, his renown, existence was for him a *via dolorosa.* Ever the solitary dreamer, he wrote a play about every two or three years, and from the very beginning of his exile the effect in Norway was like unto the explosion of a bombshell. Not wasting time in answering his critics, it was nevertheless remarked that each new piece was a veiled reply to slanderous criticism. Ghosts was absolutely intended as an answer to the attacks upon A Doll's House; here is what Nora would have become if she had been a dutiful wife, declares Ibsen, in effect; and we see Mrs. Alving in her motherly agonies. The counterblast to the criticism of Ghosts was An Enemy of the People; Dr. Stockman is easily detected as a partial portrait of Ibsen.

Georg Brandes, to whom the poet owes many ideas as well as sound criticism, said that early in his life a lyric Pegasus had been killed under Ibsen. This striking hint of his sacrifice is supplemented by a letter in which he compared the education of a poet to that of a dancing bear. The bear is tied in a brewer's vat and a slow fire is built under the vat; the wretched animal is then forced to dance. Life forces the poet to dance by means quite as painful; he dances and the tears roll down his cheeks all the while. Ibsen forsook poetry for prose and—the dividing line never to be recrossed is clearly indicated between Emperor and Galilean and The Pillars of Society—he bestowed upon his country three specimens of his poetic genius. As Italy fructified the genius of Goethe, so it touched as with a glowing coal the lips of the young Northman. Brand, a noble epic, startled and horrified Norway. In Rome Ibsen regained his equilibrium. He saw his country and country-

men more sanely, more steadily, though there is a terrible fund of bitterness in this dramatic poem. The local politics of Christiania no longer irritated him, and in the hot, beautiful South he dreamed of the North, of his beloved fiords and mountains, of ice and avalanche, of troll and saga. Luckily for those who have not mastered Norwegian, C. H. Herford's translation of Brand exists, and, while the translator deplores his sins of omission, it is a work—as are the English versions of the prose plays by William Archer—that gives one an excellent idea of the original. In Brand (1866) Ibsen is at his furthest extremity from compromise. This clergyman sacrifices his mother, his wife, his child, his own life, to a frosty ideal: "All or nothing." He is implacable in his ire against worldliness, in his contempt of churchmen that believe in half-way measures. He perishes on the heights as a voice proclaims, "He is the God of Love." Greatly imaginative, charged with spiritual spleen and wisdom, Brand at once placed Ibsen among the mighty.

He followed it with a new Odyssey of his soul, the amazing Peer Gynt (1867), in which his humor, hitherto a latent quality, his fantasy, bold invention, and the poetic evocation of the faithful, exquisite Solveig, are further testimony to his breadth of resource. Peer Gynt is all that Brand was not: whimsical, worldly, fantastic, weak-willed, not so vicious as perverse; he is very selfish, one who was to himself sufficient, therefore a failure. The will, if it frees, may also kill. It killed the soul of Peer. There are pages of unflagging humor, poetry, and observation; scene dissolves into scene; Peer travels over half the earth, is rich, is successful, is poor; and at the end meets the Button-Moulder, that ironical shadow who tells him what he has become. We hear the Boyg, the spirit of compromise, with its huge, deadly, coiling lengths, gruffly bid Peer to "go around." Facts of life are to be slunk about, never to be

faced. Peer comes to harbor in the arms of his deserted Solveig. The resounding sarcasm, the ferociousness of the attack on all the idols of the national cavern, raised a storm in Norway that did not abate for years. Ibsen was again a target for the bolts of critical and public hatred. Peer Gynt is the Scandinavian Faust.

Having purged his soul of this perilous stuff, the poet, in 1873, finished his double drama Emperor and Galilean, not a success dramatically, but a strong, interesting work for the library, though it saw the footlights at Berlin, Leipsic, and Christiania. The apostate Emperor Julian is the protagonist. We discern Ibsen the mystic philosopher longing for his Third Kingdom.

After a silence of four years The Pillars of Society appeared. Like its predecessor in the same *genre,* The Young Men's League, it is a prose drama, a study of manners, and a scathing arraignment of civic dishonesty. All the rancor of its author against the bourgeois hypocrisy of his countrymen comes to the surface; as in The Young Men's League the vacillating nature of the shallow politician is laid bare. It seems a trifle banal now, though the canvas is large, the figures animated. One recalls Augier without his Gallic *esprit,* rather than the later Ibsen. A Doll's House was once a household word, as was Ghosts (1881). There is no need now to retell the story of either play. Ghosts, in particular, has an antique quality, the *dénouement* leaves us shivering. It may be set down as the strongest play of the nineteenth century, and also the most harrowing. Its intensity borders on the hallucinatory. We involuntarily recall the last act of Tristan and Isolde or the final movement of Tschaikowsky's Pathetic symphony. It is the shrill discord between the mediocre creatures involved and the ghastly punishment meted out to the innocent that agitates and depresses us. Here are human souls illuminated as if by a lightning flash; we long

for the anticipated thunder. It does not sound. The drama ends in silence—one of those pauses (Ibsen employs the pause as does a musical composer) which leaves the spectator unstrung. The helpless sense of hovering about the edge of a bottomless gulf is engendered by this play. No man could have written it but Ibsen, and we hope that no man will ever attempt a parallel performance, for such art modulates across the borderland of the pathologic.

The Wild Duck (1884) followed An Enemy of the People (1882). It is the most puzzling of the prose dramas except The Master-Builder, for in it Ibsen deliberately mocks himself and his ideals. It is, nevertheless, a profoundly human and moving work. Gina Ekdal, the wholesome, sensible wife of Ekdal, the charlatan photographer —a *revenant* of Peer Gynt—has been called a feminine Sancho Panza. Gregers Werle, the meddlesome truth-teller; Relling—a sardonic incarnation of the author—who believes in feeding humanity on the "life-lie" to maintain its courage; the tiny Hedwig, sweetest and freshest of Ibsen's girls—these form a memorable *ensemble*. And how the piece plays! Humor and pathos alternate, while the symbol is not so remote that an average audience need miss its meaning. The end is cruel. Ibsen is often cruel, with the passionless indifference of the serene Buddha. But he is ever logical. Nora must leave her husband's house—a "happy ending" would be ridiculous—and Hedwig must be sacrificed instead of the wild duck, or her fool of a father. There is a battalion of minor characters in the Ibsen plays who recall Dickens by their grotesque, sympathetic physiognomies. To deny this dramatist humor is to miss a third of his qualities. His is not the ventripotent humor of Rabelais or Cervantes; it seldom leaves us without the feeling that the poet is slyly laughing at us, not with us, though in the early comedies there are many broad and telling strokes.

Rosmersholm (1886) is a study of two temperaments.

Rebekka West is another malevolent portrait in his gallery of dangerous and antipathetic women. She ruins Rosmersholm, ruins herself, because she does not discover this true self until too late. The play illustrates the extraordinary technic of the master. It seems to have been written backward; until the third act we are not aware that the peaceful home of the Rosmersholms is the battle-field of a malignant soul. The Lady from the Sea (1888) illustrates the thesis that love must be free. The allegory is rather strained and in performance the play lacks poetic glamour. Hedda Gabler (1890) is a masterpiece. A more selfish, vicious, cold nature than Hedda's never stepped from the page of a Russian novel—Becky Sharp and Madame Marneffe are lovable persons in comparison. She is not in the slightest degree like the stage "adventuress," but is a magnificent example of egoism magnificently delineated and is the true sister in fiction of Julien Sorel. That she is dramatically worth the while is beside the question. Her ending by a pistol shot is justice itself; alive she fascinates as does some exotic reptile. She is representative of her species, the loveless woman, the petty hater, a Lady Macbeth reversed. Ibsen has studied her with the same care and curiosity he bestowed upon the homely Gina Ekdal.

His Master-Builder (1892) is the beginning of the last cycle. A true interior drama, we enter here into the region of the symbolical. With Ibsen the symbol is always an image, never an abstraction, a state of sensibility, not a formula, and the student may winnow many examples from The Pretenders (1864), with its "kingship" idea, to the Epilogue. Solness stands on the heights only to perish, but in the full possession of his soul. Hilda Wangel is one of the most perplexing characters to realize in the modern theatre. She, with her cruelty and loveliness of perfect youth, is the work of a sorcerer who holds us spellbound while the souls he has created by his black art slowly betray themselves. It may be said that all this is not the art of

the normal theatre. Very true. It more nearly resembles a dramatic confessional with a hidden auditory bewitched into listening to secrets never suspected of the humanity that hedges us about in street or home. Ibsen is clairvoyant. He takes the most familiar material and holds it in the light of his imagination; straightway we see a new world, a northern dance of death, like the ferocious pictures of his fellow-countryman, the painter Edvard Munch.

Little Eyolf (1894) is fairly plain reading, with some fine overtones of suffering and self-abnegation. Its lesson is wholly satisfying. John Gabriel Borkman (1896), written at an age when most poets show declining power, is another monument to the vigor and genius of Ibsen. The story winds about the shattered career of a financier. There is a secondary plot, in which the parental curses come home to roost—the son, carefully reared to wipe away the stain from his father's name, prefers Paris and a rollicking life. The desolation under this roof-tree is almost epical: two sisters in deadly antagonism, a blasted man, the old wolf, whose footfalls in the chamber above become absolutely sinister as the play progresses, are made to face the hard logic of their misspent lives. The doctrine of compensation has never had such an exponent as Ibsen.

In the last of his published plays, When We Dead Awake (1899), we find earlier and familiar themes developed at moments with contrapuntal mastery. Rubek, the sculptor, has aroused a love that he never dared to face. He married the wrong woman. His early dream, the inspiration of his master work, he has lost. His art withers. And when he meets his Irene, her mind is full of wandering ghosts. To the heights, to the same peaks that Brand climbed, they both must mount, and there they are destroyed, as was Brand, by an avalanche. Eros is the triumphant god of the aged magician.

III

It must be apparent to those who have not read or seen the Ibsen plays that, despite this huddled and foreshortened account, they are in essence quite different from what has been reported of them. Idealistic, symbolistic, moral, and ennobling, the Ibsen drama was so vilified by malice and ignorance that its very name was a portent of evil. Mad or wicked Ibsen is not. His scheme of life and morals is often oblique and paradoxical, his interpretation of truths so elliptical that we are confused. But he is essentially sound. He believes in the moral continuity of the universe. His astounding energy is a moral energy. Salvation by good works is his burden. The chief thing is to be strong in your faith. He despises the weak, not the strong sinner. His Supermen are the bankrupts of romantic heroism. His strong man is frequently wrong-headed; but the weakling works the real mischief. Never admit you are beaten. Begin at the bottom twenty times, and when the top is achieved die, or else look for loftier peaks to climb. Ibsen exalts strength. His "ice-church" is chilly; the lungs drink in with difficulty the buffeting breezes on his heights; yet how bracing, how inspiring, is this austere place of worship. Bad as is mankind, Ibsen, who was ever in advance of his contemporaries, believed in its possibility for betterment. Here the optimist speaks. Brand's spiritual pride is his downfall; nevertheless, Ibsen, an aristocratic thinker, believes that of pride one cannot have too much. He recognized the selfish and hollow foundation of all "humanitarian" movements. He is a sign-post for the twentieth century when the aristocratic of spirit must enter into combat with the herd instinct of a depressing socialism. His influence has been tremendous. His plays teem with the general ideas of his century. His chief value lies in the

beauty of his art; his is the rare case of the master-singer rounding a long life with his master works. He brought to the theatre new ideas; he changed forever the dramatic map of Europe; he originated a new method of surprising life, capturing it and forcing it to give up a moiety of its mystery for the uses of a difficult and recondite art. He fashioned character anew. And he pushed resolutely into the mist that surrounded the human soul, his Diogenes lantern glimmering, his brave, lonely heart undaunted by the silence and the solitude. His message? Who shall say? He asks questions, and, patterning after nature, he seldom answers them. When his ideas sicken and die—he asserted that the greatest truth outlives its usefulness in time, and it may not be denied that his drama is a dissolvent; already the early plays are in historical twilight and the woman question of his day is for us something quite different—his art will endure. Henrik Ibsen was a man of heroic fortitude. His plays are a bold and stimulating spectacle for the spirit. Should we ask more of a dramatic poet?

XIII

MAX STIRNER

I

In 1888 John Henry Mackay, the Scottish-German poet, while at the British Museum reading Lange's History of Materialism, encountered the name of Max Stirner and a brief criticism of his forgotten book, Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum (The Only One and His Property; in French translated L'Unique et sa Propriété, and in the first English translation more aptly and euphoniously entitled The Ego and His Own). His curiosity excited, Mackay, who is an anarchist, procured after some difficulty a copy of the work, and so greatly was he stirred that for ten years he gave himself up to the study of Stirner and his teachings, and after incredible painstaking published in 1898 the story of his life. (Max Stirner: Sein Leben und sein Werk: John Henry Mackay.) To Mackay's labors we owe all we know of a man who was as absolutely swallowed up by the years as if he had never existed. But some advanced spirits had read Stirner's book, the most revolutionary ever written, and had felt its influence. Let us name two: Henrik Ibsen and Friedrich Nietzsche. Though the name of Stirner is not quoted by Nietzsche, he nevertheless recommended Stirner to a favorite pupil of his, Professor Baumgartner at Basel University. This was in 1874.

One hot August afternoon in the year 1896 at Bayreuth, I was standing in the Marktplatz when a member of the Wagner Theatre pointed out to me a house opposite, at the corner of the Maximilianstrasse, and said: "Do you see that house with the double gables? A man was born there whose name will be green when Jean Paul and Richard Wagner are forgotten." It was too large a draft upon

my credulity, so I asked the name. "Max Stirner," he replied. "The crazy Hegelian," I retorted. "You have read him, then?" "No; but you haven't read Nordau." It was true. All fire and flame at that time for Nietzsche, I did not realize that the poet and rhapsodist had forerunners. My friend sniffed at Nietzsche's name; Nietzsche for him was an aristocrat, not an Individualist—in reality, a lyric expounder of Bismarck's gospel of blood and iron. Wagner's adversary would, with Renan, place mankind under the yoke of a more exacting tyranny than Socialism, the tyranny of Culture, of the Superman. Ibsen, who had studied both Kierkegaard and Stirner—witness Brand and Peer Gynt—Ibsen was much nearer to the champion of the Ego than Nietzsche. Yet it is the dithyrambic author of Zarathustra who is responsible, with Mackay, for the recrudescence of Stirner's teachings.

Nietzsche is the poet of the doctrine, Stirner its prophet, or, if you will, its philosopher. Later I secured the book, which had been reprinted in the cheap edition of Reclam (1882). It seemed colorless, or rather gray, set against the glory and gorgeous rhetoric of Nietzsche. I could not see then what I saw a decade later—that Nietzsche had used Stirner as a springboard, as a point of departure, and that the Individual had vastly different meanings to those diverse temperaments. But Stirner displayed the courage of an explorer in search of the north pole of the Ego.

The man whose theories would make a *tabula rasa* of civilization, was born at Bayreuth, October 25, 1806, and died at Berlin June 25, 1856. His right name was Johann Caspar Schmidt, Max Stirner being a nickname bestowed upon him by his lively comrades in Berlin because of his very high and massive forehead. His father was a maker of wind instruments, who died six months after his son's birth. His mother remarried, and his stepfather proved a kind protector. Nothing of external importance occurred

in the life of Max Stirner that might place him apart from his fellow-students. He was very industrious over his books at Bayreuth, and when he became a student at the Berlin University he attended the lectures regularly, preparing himself for a teacher's profession. He mastered the classics, modern philosophy, and modern languages. But he did not win a doctor's degree; just before examinations his mother became ill with a mental malady (a fact his critics have noted) and the son dutifully gave up everything so as to be near her. After her death he married a girl who died within a short time. Later, in 1843, his second wife was Marie Dähnhardt, a very "advanced" young woman, who came from Schwerin to Berlin to lead a "free" life. She met Stirner in the Hippel circle, at a Weinstube in the Friedrichstrasse, where radical young thinkers gathered: Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Moses Hess, Jordan, Julius Faucher, and other stormy insurgents. She had, it is said, about 10,000 thalers. She was married with the ring wrenched from a witness's purse—her bridegroom had forgotten to provide one. He was not a practical man; if he had been he would hardly have written The Ego and His Own.

It was finished between the years 1843 and 1845; the latter date it was published. It created a stir, though the censor did not seriously interfere with it; its attacks on the prevailing government were veiled. In Germany rebellion on the psychic plane expresses itself in metaphysics; in Poland and Russia music is the safer medium. Feuerbach, Hess, and Szeliga answered Stirner's terrible arraignment of society, but men's thoughts were interested elsewhere, and with the revolt of 1848 Stirner was quite effaced. He had taught for five years in a fashionable school for young ladies; he had written for several periodicals, and translated extracts from the works of Say and Adam Smith.

After the book appeared, relations with his wife became uneasy. Late in 1846 or early in 1847 she left him and went to London, where she supported herself by writing; later she inherited a small sum from a sister, visited Australia, married a laborer there, and became a washerwoman. In 1897 Mackay wrote to her in London, asking her for some facts in the life of her husband. She replied tartly that she was not willing to revive her past; that her husband had been too much of an egotist to keep friends, and was "very sly." This was all he could extort from the woman, who evidently had never understood her husband and execrated his memory, probably because her little fortune was swallowed up by their mutual improvidence. Another appeal only elicited the answer that "Mary Smith is preparing for death"—she had become a Roman Catholic. It is the irony of things in general that his book is dedicated to "My Sweetheart, Marie Dähnhardt."

Stirner, after being deserted, led a precarious existence. The old jolly crowd at Hippel's seldom saw him. He was in prison twice for debt—free Prussia—and often lacked bread. He, the exponent of Egoism, of philosophic anarchy, starved because of his pride. He was in all matters save his theories a moderate man, eating and drinking temperately, living frugally. Unassuming in manners, he could hold his own in debate—and Hippel's appears to have been a rude debating society—yet one who avoided life rather than mastered it. He was of medium height, ruddy, and his eyes deep blue. His hands were white, slender, "aristocratic," writes Mackay. Certainly not the figure of a stalwart shatterer of conventions, not the ideal iconoclast; above all, without a touch of the melodrama of communistic anarchy, with its black flags, its propaganda by force, its idolatry of assassinations, bomb-throwing, killing of fat, harmless policemen, and its sentimental gabble about Fraternity. Stirner hated the word Equality; he knew it was

a lie, knew that all men are born unequal, as no two grains of sand on earth ever are or ever will be alike. He was a solitary. And thus he died at the age of fifty. A few of his former companions heard of his neglected condition and buried him. Nearly a half century later Mackay, with the co-operation of Hans von Bülow, affixed a commemorative tablet on the house where he last lived, Phillipstrasse 19, Berlin, and alone Mackay placed a slab to mark his grave in the Sophienkirchhof.

It is to the poet of the Letzte Erkentniss, with its stirring line, "Doch bin ich mein," that I owe the above scanty details of the most thorough-going Nihilist who ever penned his disbelief in religion, humanity, society, the family. He rejects them all. We have no genuine portrait of this insurrectionist—he preferred personal insurrection to general revolution; the latter, he asserted, brought in its train either Socialism or a tyrant—except a sketch hastily made by Friedrich Engels, the revolutionist, for Mackay. It is not reassuring. Stirner looks like an old-fashioned German and timid pedagogue, high coat-collar, spectacles, clean-shaven face, and all. This valiant enemy of the State, of Socialism, was, perhaps, only brave on paper. But his icy, relentless, epigrammatic style is in the end more gripping than the spectacular, volcanic, whirling utterances of Nietzsche. Nietzsche lives in an ivory tower and is an aristocrat. Into Stirner's land all are welcome. That is, if men have the will to rebel, and if they despise the sentimentality of mob rule. The Ego and His Own is the most drastic criticism of Socialism thus far presented.

II

For those who love to think of the visible universe as a cosey corner of God's footstool, there is something bleak and terrifying in the isolated position of man since science has

postulated him as an infinitesimal bubble on an unimportant planet. The soul shrinks as our conception of outer space widens. Thomas Hardy describes the sensation as "ghastly." There is said to be no purpose, no design, in all the gleaming phantasmagoria revealed by the astronomer's glass; while on our globe we are a brother to lizards, bacteria furnish our motor force, and our brain is but a subtly fashioned mirror, composed of neuronic filaments, a sort of "dark room" in which is somehow pictured the life without. Well, we admit, for the sake of the argument, that we banish God from the firmament, substituting a superior mechanism; we admit our descent from stardust and apes, we know that we have no free will, because man, like the unicellular organisms, "gives to every stimulus without an inevitable response." That, of course, settles all moral obligations. But we had hoped, we of the old sentimental brigade, that all things being thus adjusted we could live with our fellow man in (comparative) peace, cheating him only in a legitimate business way, and loving our neighbor better than ourselves (in public). Ibsen had jostled our self-satisfaction sadly, but some obliging critic had discovered his formula—a pessimistic decadent—and with bare verbal bones we worried the old white-haired mastiff of Norway. Only a decadent! It is an easy word to speak and it means nothing. With Nietzsche the case was simpler. We couldn't read him because he was a madman; but he at least was an aristocrat who held the *bourgeois* in contempt, and he also held a brief for culture. Ah! when we are young we are altruists; as Thackeray says, "Youths go to balls; men go to dinners."

But along comes this dreadful Stirner, who cries out: Hypocrites all of you. You are not altruists, but selfish persons, who, self-illuded, believe yourselves to be disinterested. Be Egoists. Confess the truth in the secrecy of your mean, little souls. We are all Egotists. Be Egoists.

There is no truth but my truth. No world but my world. I am I. And then Stirner waves away God, State, society, the family, morals, mankind, leaving only the "hateful" Ego. The cosmos is frosty and inhuman, and old Mother Earth no longer offers us her bosom as a reclining-place. Stirner has so decreed it. We are suspended between heaven and earth, like Mahomet's coffin, hermetically sealed in Self. Instead of "smiting the chord of self," we must reorchestrate the chord that it may give out richer music. (Perhaps the Higher Egoism which often leads to low selfishness.)

Nevertheless, there is an honesty in the words of Max Stirner. We are weary of the crying in the market-place, "Lo! Christ is risen," only to find an old nostrum tricked out in socialistic phrases; and fine phrases make fine feathers for these gentlemen who offer the millennium in one hand and perfect peace in the other. Stirner is the frankest thinker of his century. He does not soften his propositions, harsh ones for most of us, with promises, but pursues his thought with ferocious logic to its covert. There is no such hybrid with him as Christian Socialism, no dodging issues. He is a Teutonic Childe Roland who to the dark tower comes, but instead of blowing his horn—as Nietzsche did—he blows up the tower itself. Such an iconoclast has never before put pen to paper. He is so sincere in his scorn of all we hold dear that he is refreshing. Nietzsche's flashing epigrammatic blade often snaps after it is fleshed; the grim, cruel Stirner, after he makes a jab at his opponent, twists the steel in the wound. Having no mercy for himself, he has no mercy for others. He is never a hypocrite. He erects no altars to known or unknown gods. Humanity, he says, has become the Moloch to-day to which everything is sacrificed. Humanity—that is, the State, perhaps, even the socialistic state (the most terrible yoke of all for the individual soul). This assumed love of humanity, this sacrifice of our own personality, are the blights of

modern life. The Ego has too long been suppressed by ideas, sacred ideas of religion, state, family, law, morals. The conceptual question "What is Man?" must be changed to "Who is Man?" I am the owner of my might, and I am so when I know myself as *unique*.

Stirner is not a communist—so long confounded with anarchs—he does not believe in force. That element came into the world with the advent of Bakounine and Russian nihilism. Stirner would replace society by groups; property would be held, money would be a circulating medium; the present compulsory system would be voluntary instead of involuntary. Unlike his great contemporary, Joseph Proudhon, Stirner is not a constructive philosopher. Indeed, he is no philosopher. A moralist (or immoralist), an *Ethiker*, his book is a defense of Egoism, of the submerged rights of the Ego, and in these piping times of peace and fraternal humbug, when every nation, every man, embraces his neighbor preparatory to disembowelling him in commerce or war, Max Stirner's words are like a trumpet-blast. And many Jericho-built walls go down before these ringing tones. His doctrine is the Fourth Dimension of ethics. That his book will be more dangerous than a million bombs, if misapprehended, is no reason why it should not be read. Its author can no more be held responsible for its misreading than the orthodox faiths for their backsliders. Nietzsche has been wofully misunderstood; Nietzsche, the despiser of mob rule, has been acclaimed a very Attila—instead of which he is a culture-philosopher, one who insists that reform must be first spiritual. Individualism for him means only an end to culture. Stirner is not a metaphysician; he is too much realist. He is really a topsy-turvy Hegelian, a political pyrrhonist. His Ego is his Categorical Imperative. And if the Individual loses his value, what is his *raison d'être* for existence? What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole word but loses his own

Ego? Make your value felt, cries Stirner. The minority may occasionally err, but the majority is always in the wrong. Egoism must not be misinterpreted as petty selfishness or as an excuse to do wrong. Life will be ennobled and sweeter if we respect ourselves. "There is no sinner and no sinful egoism. . . . Do not call men sinful; and *they are not*." Freedom is not a goal. "Free—from what? Oh! what is there that cannot be shaken off? The yoke of serfdom, of sovereignty, of aristocracy and princes, the dominion of the desires and passions; yes, even the dominion of one's own will, of self-will, for the completest self-denial is nothing but freedom—freedom, to wit, from self-determination, from one's own self." This has an ascetic tang, and indicates that to compass our complete Ego the road travelled will be as thorny as any saint's of old. Where does Woman come into this scheme? There is no Woman, only a human Ego. Humanity is a convenient fiction to harry the individualist. So, society, family are the clamps that compress the soul of woman. If woman is to be free she must first be an individual, an Ego. In America, to talk of female suffrage is to propound the paradox of the masters attacking their slaves; yet female suffrage might prove a good thing—it might demonstrate the *reductio ad absurdum* of the administration of the present ballot system.

Our wail over our neighbor's soul is simply the wail of a busybody. Mind your own business! is the pregnant device of the new Egoism. Puritanism is not morality, but a psychic disorder.

Stirner, in his way, teaches that the Kingdom of God is within you. That man will ever be sufficiently perfected to become his own master is a dreamer's dream. Yet let us dream it. At least by that road we make for righteousness. But let us drop all cant about brotherly love and self-sacrifice. Let us love ourselves (respect our Ego), that we

may learn to respect our brother; self-sacrifice means doing something that we believe to be good for our souls, therefore *egotism*—the higher *egotism,* withal *egotism.* As for going to the people—the Russian phrase—let the people forget themselves as a collective body, tribe, or group, and each man and woman develop his or her Ego. In Russia "going to the people" may have been sincere—in America it is a trick to catch, not souls, but votes.

"The time is not far distant when it will be impossible for any proud, free, independent spirit to call himself a socialist, since he would be classed with those wretched toadies and worshippers of success who even now lie on their knees before every workingman and lick his hands simply because he is a workingman."

John Henry Mackay spoke these words in a book of his. Did not Campanella, in an unforgetable sonnet, sing, "The people is a beast of muddy brain that knows not its own strength. . . . With its own hands it ties and gags itself"?

III

The Ego and His Own is divided into two parts: first, The Man; second, I. Its motto should be, "I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones." But Walt Whitman's pronouncement had not been made, and Stirner was forced to fall back on Goethe—Goethe, the grand Immoralist of his epoch, wise and wicked Goethe, from whom flows all that is modern. "I base my all on Naught" ("Ich hab' Mein Sach' auf Nichts gestellt," in the joyous poem Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas!) is Stirner's key-note to his Egoistic symphony. The hateful I, as Pascal called it, caused Zola, a solid egotist himself, to assert that the English were the most egotistic of races because their I in their tongue was but a single letter, while the French employed two, and not capitalized unless beginning a sentence. Stir-

ner must have admired the English, as his I was the sole counter in his philosophy. His Ego and not the family is the unit of the social life. In antique times, when men were really the young, not the ancient, it was a world of reality. Men enjoyed the material. With Christianity came the rule of the spirit; ideas were become sacred, with the concepts of God, Goodness, Sin, Salvation. After Rousseau and the French Revolution humanity was enthroned, and the State became our oppressor. Our first enemies are our parents, our educators. It follows, then, that the only criterion of life is my Ego. Without my Ego I could not apprehend existence. Altruism is a pretty disguise for egotism. No one is or can be disinterested. He gives up one thing for another because the other seems better, nobler to him. Egotism! The ascetic renounces the pleasures of life because in his eyes renunciation is nobler than enjoyment. Egotism again! "You are to benefit yourself, and you are not to seek your benefit," cries Stirner. Explain the paradox! The one sure thing of life is the Ego. Therefore, "I am not you, but I'll use you if you are agreeable to me." Not to God, not to man, must be given the glory. "I'll keep the glory myself." What is Humanity but an abstraction? I am Humanity. Therefore the State is a monster that devours its children. It must not dictate to me. "The State and I are enemies." The State is a spook. A spook, too, is freedom. What is freedom? Who is free? The world belongs to all, but *all* are *I*. I alone am individual proprietor.

Property is conditioned by might. What I have is mine. "Whoever knows how to take, to defend, the thing, to him belongs property." Stirner would have held that property was not only nine but ten points of the law. This is Pragmatism with a vengeance. He repudiates all laws; repudiates competition, for persons are not the subject of competition, but "things" are; therefore if you are without "things" how can you compete? Persons are free, not

"things." The world, therefore, is not "free." Socialism is but a further screwing up of the State machine to limit the individual. Socialism is a new god, a new abstraction to tyrannize over the Ego. And remember that Stirner is not speaking of the metaphysical Ego of Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, but of your I, my I, the political, the social I, the economic I of every man and woman. Stirner spun no metaphysical cobwebs. He reared no lofty cloud palaces. He did not bring from Asia its pessimism, as did Schopenhauer; nor deny reality, as did Berkeley. He was a foe to general ideas. He was an implacable realist. Yet while he denies the existence of an Absolute, of a Deity, State, Categorical Imperative, he nevertheless had not shaken himself free from Hegelianism (he is Extreme Left as a Hegelian), for he erected his I as an Absolute, though only dealing with it in its relations to society. Now, nature abhors an absolute. Everything is relative. So we shall see presently that with Stirner, too, his I is not so independent as he imagines.

He says "crimes spring from fixed ideas." The Church, State, the Family, Morals, are fixed ideas. "Atheists are pious people." They reject one fiction only to cling to many old ones. Liberty for the people is not my liberty. Socrates was a fool in that he conceded to the Athenians the right to condemn him. Proudhon said (rather, Brisson before him), "Property is theft." Theft from whom? From society? But society is not the sole proprietor. Pauperism is the valuelessness of Me. The State and pauperism are the same. Communism, Socialism abolish private property and push us back into Collectivism. The individualism is enslaved by the machinery of the State or by socialism. Your Ego is not free if you allow your vices or virtues to enslave it. The intellect has too long ruled, says Stirner; it is the will (not Schopenhauer's Will to Live, or Nietzsche's Will to Power, but the sum of our activity expressed by an act

of volition; old-fashioned will, in a word) to exercise itself to the utmost. Nothing compulsory, all voluntary. Do what you will. *Fay ce que vouldras,* as Rabelais has it in his Abbey of Thélème. Not "Know thyself," but get the value out of yourself. Make your value felt. The poor are to blame for the rich. Our art to-day is the only art possible, and therefore real at the time. We are at every moment all we can be. There is no such thing as sin. It is an invention to keep imprisoned the will of our Ego. And as mankind is forced to believe theoretically in the evil of sin, yet commit it in its daily life, hypocrisy and crime are engendered. If the concept of sin had never been used as a club over the weak-minded, there would be no sinners—*i. e.*, wicked people. The individual is himself the world's history. The world is my picture. There is no other Ego but mine. Louis XIV said, "*L'Etat, c'est moi*"; I say, "*L'Univers, c'est moi.*" John Stuart Mill wrote in his famous essay on liberty that "Society has now got the better of the individual."

Rousseau is to blame for the "Social Contract" and the "Equality" nonsense that has poisoned more than one nation's political ideas. The minority is always in the right, declared Ibsen, as opposed to Comte's "Submission is the base of perfection." "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it" (Bernard Shaw). "Nature does not seem to have made man for independence" (Vauvenargues). "What can give a man liberty? Will, his own will, and it gives power, which is better than liberty" (Turgenev). To have the will to be responsible for one's self, advises Nietzsche. "I am what I am" (Brand). "To thyself be sufficient" (Peer Gynt). Both men failed, for their freedom kills. To thine own self be true. God is within you. Best of all is Lord Acton's dictum that "Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is of itself the highest political end." To will is to have to will (Ibsen).

My truth is the truth (Stirner). Mortal has made the immortal, says the Rig Veda. Nothing is greater than I (Bhagavat Gita). I am that I am (the Avesta, also Exodus). Taine wrote, "Nature is in reality a tapestry of which we see the reverse side. This is why we try to turn it." Hierarchy, oligarchy, both forms submerge the Ego. J. S. Mill demanded: "How can great minds be produced in a country where the test of a great mind is agreeing in the opinions of small minds?" Bakounine in his fragmentary essay on God and the State feared the domination of science quite as much as an autocracy. "Politics is the madness of the many for the gain of the few," Pope asserted. Read Spinoza, The Citizen and the State (Tractatus Theologico-Politicus). Or Oscar Wilde's epigram: "Charity creates a multitude of sins." "I am not poor enough to give alms," says Nietzsche. But Max Beerbohm has wittily said—and his words contain as much wisdom as wit—that "If he would have his ideas realized, the Socialist must first kill the Snob."

Science tells us that our *I* is really a *We;* a colony of cells, an orchestra of inherited instincts. We have not even free will, or at least only in a limited sense. We are an instrument played upon by our heredity and our environment. The cell, then, is the unit, not the Ego. Very well, Stirner would exclaim (if he had lived after Darwin and 1859), the cell is my cell, not yours! Away with other cells! But such an autonomous gospel is surely a phantasm. Stirner saw a ghost. He, too, in his proud Individualism was an aristocrat. No man may separate himself from the tradition of his race unless to incur the penalty of a sterile isolation. The solitary is the abnormal man. Man is gregarious. Man is a political animal. Even Stirner recognizes that man is not man without society.

In practice he would not have agreed with Havelock Ellis that "all the art of living lies in the fine mingling of letting

go and holding on." Stirner, sentimental, henpecked, myopic Berlin professor, was too actively engaged in wholesale criticism—that is, destruction of society, with all its props and standards, its hidden selfishness and heartlessness—to bother with theories of reconstruction. His disciples have remedied the omission. In the United States, for example, Benjamin R. Tucker, a follower of Josiah Warren, teaches a practical and philosophical form of Individualism. He is an Anarch who believes in passive resistance. Stirner speaks, though vaguely, of a Union of Egoists, a Verein, where all would rule all, where man, through self-mastery, would be his own master. ("In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.") Indeed, his notions as to Property and Money —"it will always be money"—sound suspiciously like those of our "captains of industry." Might conquers Right. He has brought to bear the most blazing light-rays upon the shifts and evasions of those who decry Egoism, who are what he calls "involuntary," not voluntary, egotists. Their motives are shown to the bone. Your Sir Willoughby Patternes are not real Egoists, but only half-hearted selfish weaklings. The true egotist is the altruist, says Stirner; yet Leibnitz was right; so was Dr. Pangloss. This is the best of possible worlds. Any other is not conceivable for man, who is at the top of his zoological series. (Though Quinton has made the statement that birds followed the mammal.) We are all "spectres of the dust," and to live on an overcrowded planet we must follow the advice of the Boyg: "Go roundabout!" Compromise is the only sane attitude. The world is not, will never be, to the strong of arm or spirit, as Nietzsche believes. The race is to the mediocre. The survival of the fittest means survival of the weakest. Society shields and upholds the feeble. Mediocrity rules, let Carlyle or Nietzsche thunder to the contrary. It was the perception of these facts that drove Stirner to formu-

late his theories in The Ego and His Own. He was poor, a failure, and despised by his wife. He lived under a dull, brutal régime. The Individual was naught, the State all. His book was his great revenge. It was the efflorescence of his Ego. It was his romance, his dream of an ideal world, his Platonic republic. Philosophy is more a matter of man's temperament than some suppose. And philosophers often live by opposites. Schopenhauer preached asceticism, but hardly led an ascetic life; Nietzsche's injunctions to become Immoralists and Supermen were but the buttressing up of a will diseased, by the needs of a man who suffered his life long from morbid sensibility. James Walker's suggestion that "We will not allow the world to wait for the Superman. We are the Supermen," is a convincing criticism of Nietzscheism. I am Unique. Never again will this aggregation of atoms stand on earth. Therefore I must be free. I will myself free. (It is only spiritual liberty that counts.) But my I must not be of the kind described by the madhouse doctor in Peer Gynt: "Each one shuts himself up in the barrel of self. In the self-fermentation he dives to the bottom; with the self-bung he seals it hermetically." The increased self-responsibility of life in an Egoist Union would prevent the world from ever entering into such ideal anarchy (an-arch, *i. e.*, without government). There is too much of renunciation in the absolute freedom of the will—that is its final, if paradoxical, implication—for mankind. Our Utopias are secretly based on Chance. Deny Chance in our existence and life would be without salt. Man is not a perfectible animal; not on this side of eternity. He fears the new and therefore clings to his old beliefs. To each his own chimera. He has not grown mentally or physically since the Sumerians—or a million years before the Sumerians. The squirrel in the revolving cage thinks it is progressing; Man is in a revolving cage. He goes round but he does not progress. Man is

not a logical animal. He is governed by his emotions, his affective life. He lives by his illusions. His brains are an accident, possibly from overnutrition as De Gourmont has declared. To fancy him capable of existing in a community where all will be selfgoverned is a poet's vision. That way the millennium lies, or the High Noon of Nietzsche. And would the world be happier if it ever did attain this condition?

The English translation of The Ego and His Own, by Steven T. Byington, is admirable; it is that of a philologist and a versatile scholar. Stirner's form is open to criticism. It is vermicular. His thought is sometimes confused; he sees so many sides of his theme, embroiders it with so many variations, that he repeats himself. He has neither the crystalline brilliance nor the poetic glamour of Nietzsche. But he left behind him a veritable breviary of destruction, a striking and dangerous book. It is dangerous in every sense of the word—to socialism, to politicians, to hypocrisy. It asserts the dignity of the Individual, not his debasement.

"Is it not the chief disgrace in the world not to be a unit; to be reckoned one character; not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred of thousands, of the party, of the section to which we belong, and our opinion predicted geographically as the North or the South?"

Herbert Spencer did not write these words, nor Max Stirner. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote them.

XIV

PAUL CÉZANNE

After prolonged study of the art shown at the Paris Autumn Salon you ask yourself: This whirlpool of jostling ambitions, crazy colors, still crazier drawing and composition—whither does it tend? Is there any strain of tendency, any central current to be detected? Is it young genius in the raw, awaiting the sunshine of success to ripen its somewhat terrifying gifts? Or is the exhibition a huge, mystifying *blague?* What, you ask, as you apply wet compresses to your weary eyeballs, blistered by dangerous proximity to so many blazing canvases, does the Autumn Salon mean to French art?

There are many canvases the subjects of which are more pathologic than artistic, subjects only fit for the confessional or the privacy of the clinic. But, apart from these disagreeable episodes, the main note of the Salon is a riotous energy, the noisy ebullition of a gang of students let loose in the halls of art. They seem to rush by you, yelling from sheer delight in their lung power, and if you are rudely jostled to the wall, your toes trod upon and your hat clapped down on your ears, you console yourself with the timid phrase: Youth must have its fling.

And what a fling! Largely a flinging of paint pots in the sacred features of tradition. It needs little effort of the imagination to see hovering about the galleries the faces of—no, not Gérôme, Bonnat, Jules Lefèvre, Cabanel, or any of the reverend *seigneurs* of the old Salon—but the reproachful countenances of Courbet, Manet, Degas, and Monet; for this motley-wearing crew of youngsters are as violently radical, as violently secessionistic, as were their immediate forebears. Each chap has started a little revo-

lution of his own, and takes no heed of the very men from whom he steals his thunder, now sadly hollow in the transposition. The pretty classic notion of the torch of artistic tradition gently burning as it is passed on from generation to generation receives a shock when confronted by the methods of the hopeful young anarchs of the Grand Palais. Defiance of all critical canons at any cost is their shibboleth. Compared to their fulgurant color schemes the work of Manet, Monet, and Degas pales and retreats into the Pantheon of the past. They are become classic. Another king has usurped their throne—his name is Paul Cézanne.

No need now to recapitulate the story of the New Salon and the defection from it of these Independents. It is a fashion to revolt in Paris, and no doubt some day there will arise a new group that will start the August Salon or the January Salon.

"Independent of the Independents" is a magnificent motto with which to assault any intrenched organization.

If riotous energy is, as I have said, the chief note of many of these hot, hasty, and often clever pictures, it must be sadly stated that of genuine originality there are few traces. To the very masters they pretend to revile they owe everything. In vain one looks for a tradition older than Courbet; a few have attempted to stammer in the suave speech of Corot and the men of Fontainebleau; but 1863, the year of the *Salon des Refusés,* is really the year of their artistic ancestor's birth. The classicism of Lebrun, David, Ingres, Prudhon; the romanticism of Géricault, Delacroix, Decamps; the tender poetry of those true *Waldmenschen,* Millet, Dupré, Diaz, Daubigny, or of that wild heir of Giorgione and Tiepolo, the marvellous color virtuoso who "painted music," Monticelli—all these men might never have been born except for their possible impact upon the so-called "Batignolles" school. Alas! such ingratitude must rankle. To see the major portion of this band of young

painters, with talent in plenty, occupying itself in a frantic burlesque of second-hand Cézannes, with here and there a shallow Monet, a faded Renoir, an affected Degas, or an impertinent Gauguin, must be mortifying to the older men.

And now we reach the holy precincts. If ardent youths sneered at the lyric ecstasy of Renoir, at the severe restraint of Chavannes, at the poetic mystery of Carrière, their lips were hushed as they tiptoed into the Salle Cézanne. Sacred ground, indeed, we trod as we gazed and wondered before these crude, violent, sincere, ugly, and bizarre canvases. Here was the very hub of the Independents' universe. Here the results of a hard-laboring painter, without taste, without the faculty of selection, without vision, culture—one is tempted to add, intellect—who with dogged persistency has painted in the face of mockery, painted portraits, landscapes, flowers, houses, figures, painted everything, painted himself. And what paint! Stubborn, with an instinctive hatred of academic poses, of the atmosphere of the studio, of the hired model, of "literary," or of mere digital cleverness, Cézanne has dropped out of his scheme harmony, melody, beauty—classic, romantic, symbolic, what you will!—and doggedly represented the ugliness of things. But there is a brutal strength, a tang of the soil that is bitter, and also strangely invigorating, after the false, perfumed boudoir art of so many of his contemporaries.

Think of Bouguereau and you have his antithesis in Cézanne—Cézanne whose stark figures of bathers, male and female, evoke a shuddering sense of the bestial. Not that there is offense intended in his badly huddled nudes; he only delineates in simple, naked fashion the horrors of some undressed humans. His landscapes are primitive though suffused by perceptible atmosphere; while the rough architecture, shambling figures, harsh coloring do not quite destroy the impression of general vitality. You could not say with Walt Whitman that his stunted trees were "uttering joy-

ous leaves of dark green." They utter, if anything, raucous oaths, as seemingly do the self-portraits—exceedingly well modelled, however. Cézanne's still-life attracts by its whole-souled absorption; these fruits and vegetables really savor of the earth. Chardin interprets still-life with realistic beauty; if he had ever painted an onion it would have revealed a certain grace. When Paul Cézanne paints an onion you smell it. Nevertheless, he has captured the affections of the rebels and is their god. And next season it may be some one else.

It may interest readers of Zola's L'Œuvre to learn about one of the characters, who perforce sat for his portrait in that clever novel (a direct imitation of Goncourt's Manette Salomon). Paul Cézanne bitterly resented the liberty taken by his old school friend Zola. They both hailed from Aix, in Provence. Zola went up to Paris; Cézanne remained in his birthplace but finally persuaded his father to let him study art at the capital. His father was both rich and wise, for he settled a small allowance on Paul, who, poor chap, as he said, would never earn a franc from his paintings. This prediction was nearly verified. Cézanne was almost laughed off the artistic map of Paris. Manet they could stand, even Claude Monet; but Cézanne—communard and anarchist he must be (so said the wise ones in official circles), for he was such a villainous painter! Cézanne died, but not before his apotheosis by the new crowd of the Autumn Salon. We are told by admirers of Zola how much he did for his neglected and struggling fellow townsman; how the novelist opened his arms to Cézanne. Cézanne says quite the contrary. In the first place he had more money than Zola when they started, and Zola, after he had become a celebrity, was a great man and very haughty.

"A mediocre intelligence and a detestable friend" is the way the prototype of Claude Lantier puts the case. "A bad

book and a completely false one," he added, when speaking to the painter Emile Bernard on the disagreeable theme. Naturally Zola did not pose his old friend for the entire figure of the crazy impressionist, his hero, Claude. It was a study composed of Cézanne, Bazille, and one other, a poor, wretched lad who had been employed to clean Manet's studio, entertained artistic ambitions, but hanged himself. The conversations Cézanne had with Zola, his extreme theories of light, are all in the novel—by the way, one of Zola's most finished efforts. Cézanne, an honest, hard-working man, bourgeois in habits if not by temperament, was grievously wounded by the treachery of Zola; and he did not fail to denounce this treachery to Bernard.

Paul Cézanne was born January 19, 1839. His father was a rich bourgeois, and while he was disappointed when his son refused to prosecute further his law studies, he, being a sensible parent and justly estimating Paul's steadiness of character, allowed him to go to Paris in 1862, giving him an income of a hundred and fifty francs a month, which was shortly after doubled. With sixty dollars a month an art student of twenty-three could, in those days, live comfortably, study at leisure, and see the world. Cézanne from the start was in earnest. Instinctively he realized that for him was not the rapid ascent of the rocky path that leads to Parnassus. He mistrusted his own talent, though not his powers of application. At first he frequented the Académie Suisse, where he encountered as fellow workers Pissarro and Guillaumin. He soon transferred his easel to the Beaux-Arts and became an admirer of Delacroix and Courbet. It seems strange in the presence of a Cézanne picture to realize that he, too, suffered his little term of lyric madness and wrestled with huge mythologic themes—giant men carrying off monstrous women. Connoisseurs at the sale of Zola's art treasures were astonished by the sight of a canvas signed Cézanne, the subject

of which was L'Enlèvement, a romantic subject, not lacking in the spirit of Delacroix. The Courbet influence persisted, despite the development of the younger painter in other schools. Cézanne can claim Courbet and the Dutchmen as artistic ancestors.

When Cézanne arrived in Paris the first comrade to greet him was Zola. The pair became inseparable; they fought for naturalism, and it was to Cézanne that Zola dedicated his *Salons* which are now to be found in a volume of essays on art and literature bearing the soothing title of Mes Haines. Zola, pitching overboard many friends, wrote his famous eulogy of Manet in the *Evènement,* and the row he raised was so fierce that he was forced to resign as art critic from that journal. The fight then began in earnest. The story is a thrice-told one. It may be read in Théodore Duret's study of Manet and, as regards Cézanne, in the same critic's volume on Impressionism. Cézanne exhibited in 1874 with Manet and the rest at the impressionists' salon, held at the studio of Nadar the photographer. He had earlier submitted at once to Manet's magic method of painting, but in 1873, at Auvers-sur-Oise, he began painting in the *plein air* style and with certain modifications adhered to that manner until the time of his death. The amazing part of it all is that he produced for more than thirty years and seldom sold a canvas, seldom exhibited. His solitary appearance at an official salon was in 1882, and he would not have succeeded then if it had not been for his friend Guillaumin, a member of the selecting jury, who claimed his rights and passed in, amid execrations, both mock and real, a portrait by Cézanne.

Called a *communard* in 1874, Cézanne was saluted with the title of anarchist in 1904, when his vogue had begun; these titles being a species of official nomenclature for all rebels. Thiers, once President of the French Republic, made a *bon mot* when he exclaimed: "A Romantic—that is

to say, Communist!" During his entire career this mild, reserved gentleman from Aix came under the ban of the critics and the authorities, for he had shouldered his musket in 1871, as did Manet, as did Bazille,—who, like Henri Regnault, was killed in a skirmish.

His most virulent enemies were forced to admit that Edouard Manet had a certain facility with the brush; his quality and beauty of sheer paint could not be winked away even by Albert Wolff. But to Cézanne there was no quarter shown. He was called the "Ape of Manet"; he was hissed, cursed, abused; his canvases were spat upon, and as late as 1902, when M. Roujon, the Director of the Beaux-Arts, was asked by Octave Mirbeau to decorate Cézanne, he nearly fainted from astonishment. Cézanne! That barbarian! The amiable director suggested instead the name of Claude Monet. Time had enjoyed its little whirligig with that great painter of vibrating light and water, but Monet blandly refused the long-protracted honor. Another anecdote is related by M. Duret. William II of Germany in 1899 wished to examine with his own eyes, trained by the black, muddy painting of Germany, the canvases of Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Cézanne, and Manet, acquired by Director Tschudi for the Berlin National Gallery. He saw them all except the Cézanne. Herr Tschudi feared that the Parisian fat would be in the imperial fire if the Cézanne picture appeared. So he hid it. As it was his Majesty nodded in emphatic disapproval of the imported purchases. If he had viewed the Cézanne!

At first blush, for those whose schooling has been academic, the Cézanne productions are shocking. Yet his is a personal vision, though a heavy one. He has not a facile brush; he is not a great painter; he lacks imagination, invention, fantasy; but his palette is his own. He is a master of gray tones, and his scale is, as Duret justly observes, a very intense one. He avoids the anecdote, historic or do-

mestic. He detests design, prearranged composition. His studio is an open field, light the chief actor of his palette. He is never conventionally decorative unless you can call his own particular scheme decorative. He paints what he sees without flattery, without flinching from any ugliness. Compared with him Courbet is as sensuous as Correggio. He does not seek for the correspondences of light with surrounding objects or the atmosphere in which Eugène Carrière bathes his portraits, Rodin his marbles. The Cèzanne picture does not modulate, does not flow; is too often hard, though always veracious—Cézannish veracity, be it understood. But it is an inescapable veracity. There is, too, great vitality and a peculiar reserved passion, like that of a Delacroix *à rebours*, and in his still-life he is as great even as Manet.

His landscapes are real, though without the subtle poetry of Corot or the blazing lyricism of Monet. He hails directly from the Dutch: Van der Neer, in his night pieces. Yet no Dutchman ever painted so uncompromisingly, so close to the border line that divides the rigid definitions of old-fashioned photography—the "new" photography hugs closely the mellow mezzotint—and the vision of the painter. An eye—nothing more, is Cézanne. He refuses to see in nature either a symbol or a sermon. Withal his landscapes are poignant in their reality. They are like the grillage one notes in ancient French country houses—little casements cut in the windows through which you may see in vivid outline a little section of the landscape. Cézanne marvellously renders certain surfaces, china, fruit, tapestry.

Slowly grew his fame as a sober, sincere, unaffected workman of art. Disciples rallied around him. He accepted changing fortunes with his accustomed equanimity. Maurice Denis painted for the Champ de Mars Salon of 1901 a picture entitled Hommage à Cézanne, after the well-known *hommages* of Fantin-Latour. This *hommage* had

its uses. The disciples became a swelling, noisy chorus, and in 1904 the Cézanne room was thronged by overheated enthusiasts who would have offered violence to the first critical dissident. The older men, the followers of Monet, Manet, Degas, and Whistler, talked as if the end of the world had arrived. Art is a serious affair in Paris. However, after Cézanne appeared the paintings of that half-crazy, unlucky genius, Vincent van Gogh, and of the gifted, brutal Gauguin. And in the face of such offerings Cézanne may yet, by reason of his moderation, achieve the unhappy fate of becoming a classic. He is certainly as far removed from Van Gogh and Gauguin on the one side as he is from Manet and Courbet on the other. Huysmans does not hesitate to assert that Cézanne contributed more to accelerate the impressionist movement than Manet. Paul Cézanne died in Aix, in Provence, October 23, 1906.

Emile Bernard, an admirer, a quasi-pupil of Cézanne's and a painter of established reputation, discoursed at length in the *Mercure de France* upon the methods and the man. His anecdotes are interesting. Without the genius of Flaubert, Cézanne had something of the great novelist's abhorrence of life—fear would be a better word. He voluntarily left Paris to immure himself in his native town of Aix, there to work out in peace long-planned projects, which would, he believed, revolutionize the technic of painting. Whether for good or evil, his influence on the younger men in Paris has been powerful, though it is now on the wane. How far they have gone astray in imitating him is the most significant thing related by Emile Bernard, a friend of Paul Gauguin and a member of his Pont-Aven school.

In February, 1904, Bernard landed in Marseilles after a trip to the Orient. A chance word told him that there had been installed an electric tramway between Marseilles and Aix. Instantly the name of Cézanne came to his memory;

he had known for some years that the old painter was in Aix. He resolved to visit him, and fearing a doubtful reception he carried with him a pamphlet he had written in 1889, an eulogium of the painter. On the way he asked his fellow travellers for Cézanne's address, but in vain; the name was unknown. In Aix he met with little success. Evidently the fame of the recluse had not reached his birthplace. At last Bernard was advised to go to the Mayor's office, where he would find an electoral list. Among the voters he discovered a Paul Cézanne, who was born January 19, 1839, who lived at 25 Rue Boulegon. Bernard lost no time and reached a simple dwelling house with the name of the painter on the door. He rang. The door opened. He entered and mounted a staircase. Ahead of him, slowly toiling upward, was an old man in a cloak and carrying a portfolio. It was Cézanne. After he had explained the reason for his visit, the old painter cried: "You are Emile Bernard! You are a maker of biographies! Signac"—an impressionist—"told me of you. You are also a painter?" Bernard, who had been painting for years, and was a friend of Signac, was nonplussed at his sudden literary reputation, but he explained the matter to Cézanne, who, however, was in doubt until he saw later the work of his admirer.

He had another atelier a short distance from the town; he called it "The Motive." There, facing Mount Sainte-Victoire, he painted every afternoon in the open; the majority of his later landscapes were inspired by the views in that charming valley. Bernard was so glad to meet Cézanne that he moved to Aix.

In Cézanne's studio at Aix Bernard encountered some extraordinary studies in flower painting and three death heads; also monstrous nudes, giant-like women whose flesh appeared parboiled. On the streets Cézanne was always annoyed by boys or beggars; the former were attracted by his bohemian exterior and to express their admiration

shouted at him or else threw stones; the beggars knew their man to be easy and were rewarded by small coin. Although Cézanne lived like a bachelor, his surviving sister saw that his household was comfortable. His wife and son lived in Paris and often visited him. He was rich; his father, a successful banker at Aix, had left him plenty of money; but a fanatic on the subject of art, ceaselessly searching for new and tonal combinations, he preferred a hermit's existence. In Aix he was considered eccentric though harmless. His pride was doubled by a morbid shyness. Strangers he avoided. So sensitive was he that once when he stumbled over a rock Bernard attempted to help him by seizing his arm. A terrible scene ensued. The painter, livid with fright, cursed the unhappy young Parisian and finally ran away. An explanation came when the housekeeper told Bernard that her master was a little peculiar. Early in life he had been kicked by some rascal and ever afterward was nervous. He was very irritable and not in good health.

In Bernard's presence he threw a bust made of him by Solari to the ground, smashing it. It didn't please him. In argument he lost his temper, though he recovered it rapidly. Zola's name was anathema. He said that Daumier drank too much; hence his failure to attain veritable greatness. Cézanne worked from six to ten or eleven in the morning at his atelier; then he breakfasted, repaired to the "Motive," there to remain until five in the evening. Returning to Aix, he dined and retired immediately. And he had kept up this life of toil and abnegation for years. He compared himself to Balzac's Frenhofer (in The Unknown Masterpiece), who painted out each day the work of the previous day. Cézanne adored the Venetians—which is curious—and admitted that he lacked the power to realize his inward vision; hence the continual experimenting. He most admired Veronese, and was ambitious of being received at what he called the "Salon de Bougue-

reau." The truth is, despite Cézanne's long residence in Paris, he remained provincial to the end; his father before becoming a banker had been a hairdresser, and his son was proud of the fact. He never concealed it. He loved his father's memory and had wet eyes when he spoke of him.

Bernard thinks that the vision of his master was defective; hence the sometime shocking deformations he indulged in. "His *optique* was more in his brain than in his eye." He lacked imagination absolutely, and worked slowly, laboriously, his method one of excessive complication. He began with a shadow, then a touch, superimposing tone upon tone, modelling his paint somewhat like Monticelli, but without a hint of that artist's lyricism. Sober, without rhetoric, a realist, yet with a singularly rich and often harmonious palette, Cézanne reported faithfully what his eyes told him. It angered him to see himself imitated and he was wrathful when he heard that his still-life pictures were praised in Paris. "That stuff they like up there, do they? Their taste must be low," he would repeat, his eyes sparkling with malice. He disliked the work of Paul Gauguin and repudiated the claim of being his artistic ancestor. "He did not understand me," grumbled Cézanne. He praised Thomas Couture, who was, he asserted, a true master, one who had formed such excellent pupils as Courbet, Manet, and Puvis. This rather staggered Bernard, as well it might; the paintings of Couture and Cézanne are poles apart.

He had, he said, wasted much time in his youth—particularly in literature. A lettered man, he read to Bernard a poem in imitation of Baudelaire, one would say very Baudelairian. He had begun too late, had submitted himself to other men's influence, and wished for half a century that he might "realize"—his favorite expression—his theories. When he saw Bernard painting he told him that his palette was too restricted; he needed at least twenty colors. Ber-

nard gives the list of yellows, reds, greens, and blues, with variations. "Don't make Chinese images like Gauguin," he said another time. "All nature must be modelled after the sphere, cone, and cylinder; as for color, the more the colors harmonize the more the design becomes precise." Never a devotee of form—he did not draw from the model—his philosophy can be summed up thus: Look out for the contrasts and correspondence of tones, and the design will take care of itself. He hated "literary" painting and art criticism. He strongly advised Bernard to stick to his paint and let the pen alone. The moment an artist begins to explain his work he is done for; painting is concrete, literature deals with the abstract. He loved music, especially Wagner's, which he did not understand, but the sound of Wagner's name was sympathetic, and that had at first attracted him! Pissarro he admired for his indefatigable labors. Suffering from diabetes, which killed him, his nervous tension is excusable. He was in reality an amiable, kind-hearted, religious man. Above all, simple. He sought for the simple motive in nature. He would not paint a Christ head because he did not believe himself a worthy enough Christian. Chardin he studied and had a theory that the big spectacles and visor which the Little Master (the Velasquez of vegetables) wore had helped his vision. Certainly the still-life of Cézanne's is the only modern still-life that may be compared to Chardin's; not Manet, Vollon, Chase has excelled this humble painter of Aix. He called the Ecoles des Beaux-Arts the "Bozards," and reviled as farceurs the German secessionists who imitated him. He considered Ingres, notwithstanding his science, a small painter in comparison with the Venetians and Spaniards.

A painter by compulsion, a contemplative rather than a creative temperament, a fumbler and seeker, nevertheless Paul Cézanne has formed a school, has left a considerable body of work. His optic nerve was abnormal, he saw his

planes leap or sink on his canvas; he often complained, but his patience and sincerity were undoubted. Like his friend Zola his genius—if genius there is in either man—was largely a matter of protracted labor, and has it not been said that genius is a long labor?

From the sympathetic pen of Emile Bernard we learn of a character living in the real bohemia of Paris painters who might have figured in any of the novels referred to, or, better still, might have been interpreted by Victor Hugo or Ivan Turgenev. But the Frenchman would have made of Père Tanguy a species of poor Myriel; the Russian would have painted him as he was, a saint in humility, springing from the soil, the friend of poor painters, a socialist in theory, but a Christian in practice. After following the humble itinerary of his life you realize the uselessness of "literary" invention. Here was character for a novelist to be had for the asking. The Crainquebille of Anatole France occurs to the lover of that writer after reading Emile Bernard's little study of Father Tanguy.

His name was Julien Tanguy. He was born in 1825 at Plédran, in the north of France. He was a plasterer when he married. The young couple, accustomed to hardships of all kinds, left Saint-Brieuc for Paris. This was in 1860. After various vicissitudes the man became a color grinder in the house of Edouard, Rue Clauzel. The position was meagre. The Tanguys moved up in the social scale by accepting the job of concierge somewhere on the Butte Montmartre. This gave Père Tanguy liberty, his wife looking after the house. He went into business on his own account, vending colors in the quarter and the suburbs. He traversed the country from Argenteuil to Barbizon, from Ecouen to Sarcelle. He met Pissarro, Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, all youthful and confident and boiling over with admiration for Corot, Courbet, and Millet. They patronized the honest, pleasant peddler of color and brushes, and when

they didn't have the money he trusted them. It was his prime quality that he trusted people. He cared not enough for money, as his too often suffering wife averred, and his heart, always on his sleeve, he was an easy mark for the designing. This supreme simplicity led him into joining the Communists in 1871, and then he had a nasty adventure. One day, while dreaming on sentry duty, a band from Versailles suddenly descended upon the outposts. Père Tanguy lost his head. He could not fire on a fellow-being, and he threw away his musket. For this act of "treachery" he was sentenced to serve two years in the galleys at Brest. Released by friendly intervention he had still to remain without Paris for two years more. Finally, entering his beloved quarter he resumed his tranquil occupation, and hearing that the Maison Edouard had been moved from the Rue Clauzel he rented a little shop, where he sold material to artists, bought pictures, and entertained in his humble manner any friend or luckless devil who happened that way.

Cézanne and Vignon were his best customers. Guillemin, Pissarro, Renoir, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Oller, Messurer, Augustin, Signac, De Lautrec, symbolists of the Pont-Aven school, neo-impressionists, and the young *fumistes* of schools as yet unborn, revolutionaries with one shirt to their back, swearing at the official *Salon* and also swearing by the brotherhood of man (with a capital), assembled in this dingy old shop. Tanguy was a rallying point. He was full of the milk of human kindness, and robbed himself to give a worthless fellow with a hard-luck story some of the sous that should have gone to his wife. Fortunately she was a philosopher as well as an admirable housekeeper. If the rent was paid and there was some soup-meat for dinner she was content. More she could not expect from a man who gave away with both hands. But —and here is the curious part of this narrative of M. Ber-

nard's—Tanguy was the only person in Paris who bought and owned pictures by Cézanne. He had dozens of his canvases stacked away in the rear of his establishment—Cézanne often parted with a canvas for a few francs. When Tanguy was hard up he would go to some discerning amateur and sell for two hundred francs pictures that to-day bring twenty thousand francs. Tanguy hated to sell, especially his Cézannes. Artists came to see them. His shop was the scene of many a wordy critical battle. Gauguin uttered the paradox, "Nothing so resembles a daub as a masterpiece," and the novelist Elémir Bourges cried, "This is the painting of a vintager!" Alfred Stevens roared in the presence of the Cézannes, Anquetin admired; but, as Bernard adds, Jacques Blanche bought. So did Durand-Ruel, who has informed me that a fine Cézanne to-day is a difficult fish to hook. The great public won't have him, and the amateurs who adore him jealously hold on to their prizes.

The socialism of Père Tanguy was of a mild order. He pitied with a Tolstoyan pity the sufferings of the poor. He did not hate the rich, nor did he stand at street corners preaching the beauties of torch and bomb. A simple soul, uneducated, not critical, yet with an instinctive *flair* for the coming triumphs of his young men, he espoused the cause of his clients because they were poverty-stricken, unknown, and revolutionists—an æsthetic revolution was his wildest dream. He said of Cézanne that "Papa Cézanne always quits a picture before he finishes it. If he moves he lets his canvases lie in the vacated studio." He no doubt benefited by this carelessness of the painter. Cézanne worked slowly, but he never stopped working; he left nothing to hazard, and, astonishing fact, he spent every morning at the Louvre. There he practised his daily scales, optically speaking, before taking up the brush for the day's work. Many of Vincent von Gogh's pictures Tanguy

owned. This was about 1886. The eccentric, gifted Dutchman attracted the poor merchant by his ferocious socialism. He was, indeed, a ferocious temperament, working like a madman, painting with his color tubes when he had no brushes, and literally living in the *boutique* of Tanguy. The latter always read *Le Cri du Peuple* and *L'Intransigeant*, and believed all he read. He did not care much for Van Gogh's compositions, no doubt agreeing with Cézanne, who, viewing them for the first time, calmly remarked to the youth, "Sincerely, you paint like a crazy man." A prophetic note! Van Gogh frequented a tavern kept by an old model, an Italian woman. It bore the romantic title of The Tambourine. When he couldn't pay his bills he would cover the walls with furious frescos, flowers of tropical exuberance, landscapes that must have been seen in a nightmare. He was painting at this time three pictures a day. He would part with a canvas at the extortionate price of a franc.

Tanguy was the possessor of a large portrait by Cézanne, done in his earliest manner. This he had to sell on account of pressing need. Dark days followed. He moved across the street into smaller quarters. The old crowd began to drift away; some died, some had become famous, and one, Van Gogh, shot himself in an access of mania. This was a shock to his friend. A second followed when Van Gogh's devoted brother went mad. Good Father Tanguy, as he was affectionately called, sickened. He entered a hospital. He suffered from a cancerous trouble of the stomach. One day he said to his wife, who was visiting him: "I am bored here. . . . I won't die here. . . . I mean to die in my own home." He went home and died shortly afterward. In 1894 Octave Mirbeau wrote a moving article for the *Journal* about the man who had never spoken ill of any one, who had never turned from his door a hungry person. The result was a sale organized at the Hôtel Drouot, to which

prominent artists and literary folk contributed works. Cazin, Guillemet, Gyp, Maufra, Monet, Luce, Pissaro, Rochegrosse, Sisley, Vauthier, Carrier-Belleuse, Berthe Morisot, Renoir, Jongkind, Raffaelli, Helleu, Rodin, and many others participated in this noble charity, which brought the widow ten thousand francs. She soon died.

Van Gogh painted a portrait of Tanguy about 1886. It is said to belong to Rodin. It represents the naïve man with his irregular features and placid expression of a stoic; not a distinguished face, but unmistakably that of a gentle soul, who had loved his neighbor better than himself (therefore he died in misery). He it was who may be remembered by those who knew him—and also a few future historians of the futility of things in general—as the man who first made known to Paris the pictures of the timid, obstinate Paul Cézanne. An odd fish, indeed, was this same Julien Tanguy, little father to painters.

XV

MONTICELLI

I

Poor "Fada"! The "innocent," the inoffensive fool—as they christened that unfortunate man of genius, Adolphe Monticelli, in the dialect of the South, the slang of Marseilles—where he spent the last sixteen years of his life. The richest colorist of the nineteenth century, obsessed by color, little is known of this Monticelli, even in these days when an artist's life is subjected to inquisitorial methods. Few had written of him in English before W. E. Henley and W. C. Brownell. In France eulogized by Théophile Gautier, in favor at the court, admired by Diaz, Daubigny, Troyon, and Delacroix, his hopes were cracked by the catastrophe of the Franco-Prussian war. He escaped to Marseilles, there to die poor, neglected, half mad. Perhaps he was to blame for his failures; perhaps his temperament was his fate. Yet to-day his pictures are sought for as were those of Diaz two decades ago, though there was a tacit conspiracy among dealers and amateurs not to drag his merits too soon before the foot-lights. In 1900 at the Paris Exposition a collection of his works, four being representative, opened the eyes of critics and public alike. It was realized that Monticelli had not received his proper ranking in the nineteenth-century theatre of painting; that while he owed much to Watteau, to Turner, to Rousseau, he was a master who could stand or fall on his own merits. Since then the Monticelli pictures have been steadily growing in favor.

There is a Monticelli cult. America can boast of many of his most distinguished specimens, while the Louvre and

the Luxembourg are without a single one. The Musée de Lille at Marseilles has several examples; the private collections of M. Delpiano at Cannes and a few collections in Paris make up a meagre list. The Comparative Exhibition in New York, 1904, revealed to many accustomed to over-praising Diaz and Fromentin the fact that Monticelli was their superior as a colorist, and a decorator of singularly fascinating characteristics, one who was not always a mere contriver of bacchanalian riots of fancy, but who could exhibit when at his best a *justesse* of vision and a controlled imagination.

The dictionaries offer small help to the student as to the doings of this erratic painter. He was born October 24, 1824. He died June 29, 1886. He was of mixed blood, Italian and French. His father was a gauger, though Adolphe declared that he was an authentic descendant of the Crusader, Godefroy Monticelli, who married in 1100 Aurea Castelli, daughter of the Duca of Spoleto. Without doubt his Italian blood counted heavily in his work, but whether of noble issue matters little. Barbey d'Aurevilly and Villiers de l'Isle Adam, two men of letters, indulged in similar boasts, and no doubt in their poverty and tribulations the oriflamme of aristocracy which they bravely bore into the café life of Paris was a source of consolation to them. But it is with brains, not blood, that painters mix their pigments, and the legend of high birth can go with the other fictions reported by Henley that Monticelli was an illegitimate offshoot of the Gonzagas; that he was the natural son of Diaz; that Diaz kept him a prisoner for years, to "steal the secret of his colors."

Like many another of his temperament, he had himself to thank for his woes, though it was a streak of ill-luck for him when the Prussians bore down on Paris. He was beginning to be known. A pupil of Raymond Aubert (1781–1857), he was at first a "fanatic of Raphael and Ingres."

Delacroix and his violently harmonized color masses settled the future colorist. He met Diaz and they got on very well together. A Southerner, handsome, passionate, persuasive, dashing, with the eloquence of the meridional, Monticelli and his musical name made friends at court and among powerful artists. In 1870 he started on his walk of thirty-six days from Paris to Marseilles. He literally painted his way. In every inn he shed masterpieces. Precious gold dripped from his palette, and throughout the Rhone valley there are, it is whispered—by white-haired old men the memory of whose significant phrases awakes one in the middle of the night longing for the valley of Durance—that if a resolute, keen-eyed adventurer would traverse unostentatiously the route taken by Monticelli during his Odyssey the rewards might be great. It is an idea that grips one's imagination, but unfortunately it is an idea that gripped the imagination of others thirty years ago. Not an *auberge,* hotel, or hamlet has been left unexplored. The fine-tooth comb of familiar parlance has been sedulously used by interested persons. If there are any Monticellis unsold nowadays they are for sale at the dealers'.

In him was incarnate all that we can conceive as bohemian, with a training that gave him the high-bred manner of a seigneur. He was a romantic, like his friend Félix Ziem—Ziem, Marcellin, Deboutin, and Monticelli represented a caste that no longer exists; bohemians, yes, but gentlemen, refined and fastidious. Yet, after his return to his beloved Marseilles, Monticelli led the life of an august vagabond. In his velvet coat, a big-rimmed hat slouched over his eyes, he patrolled the quays, singing, joking, an artless creature, so good-hearted and irresponsible that he was called "Fada," more in affection than contempt. He painted rapidly, a picture daily, sold it on the *terrasses* of the cafés for a hundred francs, and when he couldn't get a hundred he would take sixty. Now one must pay thou-

sands for a canvas. His most loving critic, Camille Mauclair, who, above any one, has battled valiantly for his art, tells us that Monticelli once took eighteen francs for a small canvas because the purchaser had no more in his pocket! In this manner he disposed of a gallery. He smoked happy pipes and sipped his absinthe—in his case as desperate an enemy as it had proved to De Musset. He would always doff his hat at the mention of Watteau or Rubens. They were his gods.

When Monticelli arrived in Marseilles after his tramp down from Paris he was literally in rags. M. Chave, a good Samaritan, took him to a shop and togged him out in royal raiment. They left for a promenade, and then the painter begged his friend to let him walk alone so as not to attenuate the effect he was bound to produce on the passers-by, such a childish, harmless vanity had he. His delight was to gather a few chosen ones over a bottle of old vintage, and thus with spasmodic attempts at work his days rolled by. He was feeble, semi-paralyzed. With the advent of bad health vanished the cunning of his hand. His paint coarsened, his colors became crazier. His pictures at this period were caricatures of his former art. Many of the early ones were sold as the productions of Diaz, just as to-day some Diazes are palmed off as Monticellis. After four years of decadence he died, repeating for months before his taking off: "Je viens de la lune." He was one whose brain a lunar ray had penetrated; but this ray was transposed to a spectrum of gorgeous hues. Capable of depicting the rainbow, he died of the opalescence that clouded his glass of absinthe. *Pauvre Fada!*

II

It is only a coincidence, yet a curious one, that two such dissimilar spirits as Stendhal and Monticelli should have

predicted their future popularity. Stendhal said: "About 1880 I shall be understood." Monticelli said in 1870: "I paint for thirty years hence." Both prophecies have been realized. After the exhibition at Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1890 Monticelli was placed by a few discerning critics above Diaz in quality of paint. In 1892 Mr. Brownell said of Monticelli in his French Art—a book that every student and amateur of painting should possess—that the touch of Diaz, patrician as it was, lacked the exquisiteness of Monticelli's; though he admits the "exaggeration of the decorative impulse" in that master. For Henley Monticelli's art was purely sensuous; "his fairy meadows and enchanted gardens are that sweet word 'Mesopotamia' in two dimensions." Henley speaks of his "clangors of bronze and gold and scarlet" and admits that "there are moments when his work is as infallibly decorative as a Persian crock or a Japanese brocade." D. S. MacColl, in his study of Nineteenth-Century Painting, gives discriminating praise: "Monticelli's own exquisite sense of grace in women and invention in grouping add the positive new part without which his art would be the mannerizing of Rousseau," while Arthur Symons in his Studies in Seven Arts declares all Monticelli's art "tends toward the effect of music . . . his color is mood . . . his mood is color."

It remained, however, for Camille Mauclair, a Parisian critic in sympathy with the arts of design, literature, and music, to place Monticelli in his proper niche. This Mauclair has done with critical tact. In his Great French Painters, the bias of which is evidently strained in favor of the impressionistic school, in his L'Impressionisme, and in his monograph on Watteau this critic declares that Monticelli's art "recalls Claude Lorraine a little and Watteau even more by its sentiment, and Turner and Bonington by its color. . . . His work has the same subtlety of gradations, the same division into fragments of tones (as

in Watteau's 'Embarkment for Cythera'), the same variety of execution, which has sometimes the opaqueness of china and enamel and sometimes the translucence of precious stones or the brilliancy of glass, metal, or oxides and seems to be the result of some mysterious chemistry. . . . Monticelli had an absolutely unique perception of tonalities, and his glance took in certain shades which had not been observed before, which the optic and chromatic science of the day has placed either by proof or hypothesis between the principal tones of the solar spectrum thirty years after Monticelli had fixed them. There is magic and high lyric poetry in his art." I wrote of the Monticellis exhibited at the Comparative Exhibition in New York: "At the opposite end of the room there is A Summer Day's Idyll, upon which Monticelli had squeezed all his flaming tubes. It seems orchestrated in crushed pomegranate, the light suffusing the reclining figures like a jewelled benediction. Marvellous, too, are the color-bathed creatures in this No Man's Land of drugged dreams. . . . Do not the walls fairly vibrate with this wealth of fairy tints and fantasy?" But it must not be forgotten that he struck other chords besides blazing sun-worshipping. We often encounter landscapes of vaporous melancholy, twilights of revery.

Monticelli once told an admiring young amateur that in his canvases "the objects are the decorations, the touches are the scales, and the light is the tenor," thereby acknowledging himself that he felt color as music. There was hyperæsthesia in his case; his eyes were protuberant and, like the ears of violinists, capable of distinguishing quarter tones, even sixteenths. There are affiliations with Watteau; the same gem-like style of laying on the thick *pâte,* the same delight in fairy-like patches of paint to represent figures. In 1860 he literally resuscitated Watteau's manner, adding a personal note and a richness hitherto unknown to French paint. Mauclair thinks that to Watteau can be

traced back the beginnings of modern Impressionism; the division of tones, the juxtaposition of tonalities. Monticelli was the connecting link between Watteau and Monet. The same critic does not hesitate to name Monticelli as one of the great quartet of harmonists, Claude, Turner, Monet being the other three. Taine it was who voiced the philosophy of Impressionism when he announced in his Philosophie de l'Art that the principal personage in a picture is the light in which all things are plunged. Eugène Carrière also asserted that a "picture is the logical development of light." Monticelli before him had said: "In a painting one must sound the *C*. Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau, all the great ones have sounded the *C*." His C, his key-note, was the magic touch of luminosity that dominated his picture. Like Berlioz, he adored color for color's sake. He had a touch all Venetian in his relation of tones; at times he went in search of chromatic adventures, returning with the most marvellous trophies. No man before or since, not even those practitioners of dissonance and martyrs to the enharmonic scale, Cézanne, Gauguin, or Van Gogh, ever matched and modulated such widely disparate tints; no man before could extract such magnificent harmonies from such apparently irreconcilable tones. Monticelli thought in color and was a master of orchestration, one who went further than Liszt.

The simple-minded Monticelli had no psychology to speak of—he was a reversion, a "throw back" to the Venetians, the decorative Venetians, and if he had possessed the money or the leisure—he hadn't enough money to buy any but small canvases—he might have become a French Tiepolo, and perhaps the greatest decorative artist of France. Even his most delicate pictures are largely felt and sonorously executed; not "finished" in the studio sense, but complete—two different things. Fate was against him, and the position he might have had was won by the gentle Puvis de

Chavannes, who exhibited a genius for decorating monumental spaces. With his fiery vision, his brio of execution, his palette charged with jewelled radiance, Monticelli would have been the man to have changed the official interiors of Paris. His energy at one period was enormous, consuming, though short-lived—1865–75. His lack of self-control and at times his Italian superficiality, never backed by a commanding intellect, produced the Monticelli we know. In truth his soul was not complicated. He could never have attacked the psychology of Zarathustra, Hamlet, or Peer Gynt. A Salome from him would have been a delightfully decorative minx, set blithely dancing in some many-hued and enchanted garden of Armida. She would never have worn the air of hieratic lasciviousness with which Gustave Moreau inevitably dowered her. There was too much joy of the south in Monticelli's bones to concern himself with the cruel imaginings of the Orient or the grisly visions of the north. He was Oriental *au fond;* but it was the Orientalism of the Thousand and One Nights. He painted scenes from the Decameron, and his *fêtes galantes* may be matched with Watteau's in tone. His first period was his most graceful; ivory-toned languorous dames, garbed in Second Empire style, languidly stroll in charming parks escorted by fluttering Cupids or stately cavaliers. The "decorative impulse" is here at its topmost. In his second period we get the Decameron series, the episodes from Faust, the Don Quixote—recall, if you can, that glorious tableau with its Spanish group and the long, grave don and merry, rotund squire entering on the scene, a fantastic sky behind them.

Painted music! The ruins, fountains, statues, and mellow herbage abound in this middle period. The third is less known. Extravagance began to rule; scarlet fanfares are sounded; amethysts and emeralds sparkle; yet there is more thematic variety. Voluptuous, perfumed, and semi-tragic

notes were uttered by this dainty poet of the carnival of life. The canvas glowed with more reverberating and infernal lights, but lyric ever. Technic, fabulous and feverish, expended itself on flowers that were explosions of colors, on seductive marines, on landscapes of a rhythmic, haunting beauty—the Italian temperament had become unleashed. Fire, gold, and purple flickered and echoed in Monticelli's canvases. Irony, like an insinuating serpent, began to creep into this paradise of melting hues. The masterful gradations of tone became bewildered. Poison was eating the man's nerves. He discarded the brush, and standing before his canvas he squeezed his tubes upon it, literally modelling his paint with his thumb until it almost assumed the relief of sculpture. What a touch he had! What a subtle prevision of modulations to be effected by the careless scratch of his nail or the whip of a knife's edge! Remember, too, that originally he had been an adept in the art of design; he could draw as well as his peers. But he sacrificed form and observation and psychology to sheer color. He, a veritable discoverer of tones—aided thereto by an abnormal vision—became the hasty improviser, who at the last daubed his canvases with a pasty mixture, as hot and crazy as his ruined soul. The end did not come too soon. A chromatic genius went under, leaving but a tithe of the gleams that illuminated his brain. Alas, poor Fada!

XVI

RODIN

I

Rodin, the French sculptor, deserves well of our new century; the old one did so incontinently batter him. The anguish of his own Hell's Portal he endured before he moulded its clay between his thick clairvoyant fingers. Misunderstood, therefore misrepresented, he with his pride and obstinacy aroused—the one buttressing the other—was not to be budged from his formulas and practice of sculpture. Then the world of art swung unwillingly and unamiably toward him, perhaps more from curiosity than conviction. Rodin became famous. And he is more misunderstood than ever. His very name, with its memory of Eugène Sue's romantic rancor—you recall that impossible and diabolic Jesuit Rodin in The Mysteries of Paris?—has been thrown in his teeth. He has been called *rusé*, even a fraud; while the wholesale denunciation of his work as erotic is unluckily still green in our memory. The sculptor, who in 1877 was accused of "faking" his life-like Age of Brass—now at the Luxembourg—by taking a mould from the living model, also experienced the discomfiture of being assured some years later that, not knowing the art of modelling, his statue of Balzac was only an evasion of difficulties. And this to the man who had in the interim wrought so many masterpieces.

To give him his due he stands prosperity not quite as well as he did poverty. In every great artist there is a large area of self-esteem; it is the reservoir which he must, during years of drought and defeat, draw upon to keep his soul fresh. Without the consoling fluid of egoism, genius must

perish in the dust of despair. But fill this source to the brim, accelerate the speed of its current, and artistic deterioration may ensue. Rodin has been called, fatuously, the second Michael Angelo—as if there could ever be a replica of any human. He has been hailed as a modern Praxiteles. And he is often damned as a myopic decadent whose insensibility to pure line and efficiency in constructional power have been elevated by his admirers into sorry virtues. Yet is Rodin justly appraised? Do his friends not overdo their glorification, his critics their censure? Nothing so stales a demigod's image as the perfumes burned before it by his worshippers; the denser the smoke the sooner crumble the feet of their idol.

However, in the case of Rodin the fates have so contrived their malicious game that at no point of his career has he been without the company of envy, chagrin, and slander. Often, when he had attained a summit, he would find himself thrust down into a deeper valley. He has mounted to triumphs and fallen to humiliations, but his spirit has never been quelled, and if each acclivity he scales is steeper, the air atop has grown purer, more stimulating, and the landscape spreads wider before him. He can say with Dante: "La montagna che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti." Rodin's mountain has always straightened in him what the world made crooked. The name of his mountain is Art. A born non-conformist, Rodin makes the fourth of that group of nineteenth-century artists—Richard Wagner, Henrik Ibsen, and Edouard Manet—who taught a deaf and blind world to hear and see and think and feel.

Is it not dangerous to say of a genius that his work alone should count, that his life is negligible? Though Rodin has followed Flaubert's advice to artists to lead ascetic lives that their art might be the more violent, nevertheless his career, colorless as it may seem to those who

better love stage players and the watery comedies of society—this laborious life of a poor sculptor—is not to be passed over if we are to make any estimate of his art. He, it is related, always becomes enraged at the word "inspiration," enraged at the common notion that fire descends from heaven upon the head of the favored neophyte of art. Rodin believes in but one inspiration—nature. He swears he does not invent, but copies nature. He despises improvisation, has contemptuous words for "fatal facility," and, being a slow-moving, slow-thinking man, he admits to his councils those who have conquered art, not by assault, but by stealth and after years of hard work. He sympathizes with Flaubert's patient toiling days, he praises Holland because after Paris it seemed slow. "Slowness is a beauty," he declared. In a word, Rodin has evolved a theory and practice of his art that is the outcome—like all theories, all technics—of his own temperament. And that temperament is giant-like, massive, ironic, grave, strangely perverse at times; and it is the temperament of a magician doubled by that of a mathematician.

Books are written about him. De Maupassant describes him in Notre Cœur with picturesque precision. He is tempting as a psychologic study. He appeals to the literary, though he is not "literary." His modelling arouses tempests, either of dispraise or idolatry. To see him steadily, critically, after a visit to his studios in Paris or Meudon, is difficult. If the master be there then you feel the impact of a personality that is as cloudy as the clouds about the base of a mountain and as impressive as the mountain. Yet a pleasant, unassuming, sane man, interested in his clay—absolutely—that is, unless you discover him to be more interested in humanity. If you watch him well you may find yourself well watched; those peering eyes possess a vision that plunges into your soul. And the soul this master of marbles sees as nude as he sees the human body. It is

the union of artist and psychologist that places Rodin apart. These two arts he practises in a medium that has hitherto not betrayed potentialities for such almost miraculous performances. Walter Pater is quite right in maintaining that each art has its separate subject-matter; nevertheless, in the debatable province of Rodin's sculpture we find strange emotional power, hints of the art of painting and a rare musical suggestiveness. But this is not playing the game according to the rules of Lessing and his Laocoön.

Let us drop this old æsthetic rule of thumb and confess that during the last century a new race of artists sprang up from some strange element and, like flying-fish, revealed to a wondering world their composite structures. Thus we find Berlioz painting with his instrumentation; Franz Liszt, Tschaikowsky, and Richard Strauss filling their symphonic poems with drama and poetry, and Richard Wagner inventing an art which he believed to embrace the seven arts. And there is Ibsen, who used the dramatic form as a vehicle for his anarchistic ideas; and Nietzsche, who was such a poet that he was able to sing a mad philosophy into life; and Rossetti, who painted poems and made poetry that is pictorial. Sculpture was the only art that had resisted this universal disintegration, this imbroglio of the arts. No sculptor before Rodin had dared to break the line, dared to shiver the syntax of stone. For sculpture is a static, not a dynamic art—is it not? Let us observe the rules, though we preserve the chill spirit of the cemetery. What Mallarmé attempted to do with French poetry Rodin accomplished in clay. His marbles do not represent but present emotion, are the evocation of emotion itself; as in music, form and substance coalesce. If he does not, as did Mallarmé, arouse "the silent thunder afloat in the leaves," he can summon from the vasty deep the spirits of love, hate, pain, despair, sin, beauty, ecstasy; above all, ecstasy. Now the primal gift of ecstasy is bestowed upon

few. In our age Keats had it, and Shelley; Byron, despite his passion, missed it, and so did Wordsworth. We find it in Swinburne, he had it from the first; but few French poets have it. Like the "cold devils" of Félicien Rops, coiled in frozen ecstasy, the blasts of hell about them, Charles Baudelaire can boast the dangerous attribute. Poe and Heine knew ecstasy, and Liszt also; Wagner was the master adept of his century. Tschaikowsky followed him close; and in the tiny piano scores of Chopin ecstasy is pinioned in a few bars, the soul often rapt to heaven in a phrase. Richard Strauss has shown a rare variation on the theme of ecstasy; voluptuousness troubled by pain, the soul tormented by stranger nuances.

Rodin is of this tormented choir; he is master of its psychology. It may be the decadence, as any art is in decadence which stakes the parts against the whole. The same was said of Beethoven by the followers of Haydn, and the successors of Richard Strauss will be surely abused quite as violently as the Wagnerites abuse Strauss to-day—employing against him the same critical artillery employed against Wagner. That this ecstasy should be aroused by pictures of love and death, as in the case of Poe and Baudelaire, Wagner, and Strauss, must not be adjudged as a black crime. In the Far East they hypnotize neophytes with a bit of broken mirror, for in the kingdom of art, as in the Kingdom of Heaven, there are many mansions. Possibly it was a relic of his early admiration and study of Baudelaire that set Wagner to extorting ecstasy from his orchestra by images of death and love; and no doubt the temperament which seeks such combinations—a temperament commoner in mediæval days than ours—was inherent in Wagner. He makes his Isolde sing mournfully and madly over a corpse and, throwing herself upon the dead body of Tristan, die shaken by the sweet cruel pains of love. Richard Strauss closely patterns after Wagner in his Salome, there is the head of a dead

man, and there is the same dissolving ecstasy. Both men play with similar counters—love and death, and death and love. And so Rodin. In Pisa we may see (attributed by Vasari) Orcagna's fresco of the Triumph of Death. The sting of the flesh and the way of all flesh are inextricably blended in Rodin's Gate of Hell. His principal reading for forty years has been Dante and Baudelaire. The Divine Comedy and Les Fleurs du Mal are the key-notes in this white symphony of Auguste Rodin's. Love and life and bitterness and death rule the themes of his marbles. Like Beethoven and Wagner he breaks the academic laws of his art, but then he is Rodin, and where he achieves magnificently lesser men would miserably perish. His large tumultuous music is for his chisel alone to ring out and sing.

II

The first and still the best study of Rodin as man and thinker is to be found in a book by Judith Cladel, the daughter of the novelist (author of Mes Paysans). She named it Auguste Rodin, pris sur la vie, and her pages are filled with surprisingly vital sketches of the workaday Rodin. His conversations are recorded; altogether this little picture has much charm and proves what Rodin asserts—that women understand him better than men. There is a fluid, feminine, disturbing side to his art and nature very appealing to emotional women. Mlle. Cladel's book has also been treasure-trove for the anecdote hunters; all have visited her pages. Camille Mauclair admits his indebtedness; so does Frederick Lawton, whose big volume is the most complete life (probably official) that has thus far appeared, either in French or English. It is written on the side of Rodin, like Mauclair's more subtle study, and like the masterly criticism of Roger Marx. Born at Paris in 1840—the natal year of his friends Claude Monet and Zola—and in humble

circumstances, not enjoying a liberal education, the young Rodin had to fight from the beginning, fight for bread as well as an art schooling. He was not even sure of a vocation. An accident determined it. He became a workman in the atelier of Carrier-Belleuse, the sculptor, but not until he had failed at the Beaux-Arts (which was a stroke of luck for his genius) and after he had enjoyed some tentative instruction under the great animal sculptor, Barye. He was never a steady pupil of Barye, nor did he long remain with him. He went to Belgium and "ghosted" for other sculptors; indeed, it was a privilege, or misfortune, to have been the "ghost"—anonymous assistant—for half a dozen sculptors. He learned his technic by the sweat of his brow before he began to make music upon his own instrument.

How his first work, The Man With the Broken Nose, was refused by the Salon jury is history. He designed for the Sèvres porcelain works; he made portrait busts, architectural ornaments for sculptors, caryatides; all styles that are huddled in the yards and studios of sculptors he had essayed and conquered. No man knew his trade better, although we are informed that with the chisel of the *practicien* Rodin was never proficient—he could not or would not work at the marble *en bloc*. His works to-day are in the leading museums of the world and he is admitted to have "talent" by the academic men. Rivals he has none, nor will he have successors. His production is too personal. Like Richard Wagner, Rodin has proved a Upas tree for many lesser men—he has reflected or else absorbed them. His closest friend, the late Eugène Carrière, warned young sculptors not to study Rodin too curiously. Carrière was wise, but his own art of portraiture was influenced by Rodin; swimming in shadow, his enigmatic heads have a suspicion of the quality of sculpture—Rodin's—not the mortuary art of so much academic sculpture.

A profound student of light and of movement, Rodin, by

deliberate amplification of the surfaces of his statues, avoiding dryness and harshness of outline, secures a zone of radiancy, a luminosity, which creates the illusion of reality. He handles values in clay as a painter does his tones. He gets the design of the outline by movement which continually modifies the anatomy—the secret, he believes, of the Greeks. He studies his profiles successively in full light, obtaining volume—or planes—at once and together; successive views of one movement. The light plays with more freedom upon his amplified surfaces—intensified in the modelling by enlarging the lines. The edges of certain parts are amplified, deformed, falsified, and we see that light-swept effect, that appearance as if of luminous emanations. This deformation, he declares, was practised by the great sculptors to snare the undulating appearance of life. Sculpture, he asserts, is the "art of the hole and the lump, not of clear, well-smoothed, unmodelled figures." Finish kills vitality. Yet Rodin can chisel a smooth nymph for you if he so wills, but her flesh will ripple and run in the sunlight. His art is one of accents. He works by profile in depth, not by surfaces. He swears by what he calls "cubic truth"; his pattern is a mathematical figure; the pivot of art is balance, *i. e.*, the oppositions of volume produced by movement. Unity haunts him. He is a believer in the correspondences of things, of the continuity in nature; a mystic as well as a geometrician. Yet such a realist is he that he quarrels with any artist who does not see "the latent heroic in every natural movement."

Therefore he does not force the pose of his model, preferring attitudes or gestures voluntarily adopted. His sketch-books, as copious, as vivid as the drawings of Hokusai—he is very studious of Japanese art—are swift memoranda of the human machine as it dispenses its normal muscular motions. Rodin, draftsman, is as surprising and original as Rodin, sculptor. He will study a human foot

for months, not to copy it, but to possess the secret of its rhythms. His drawings are the swift notations of a sculptor whose eye is never satisfied, whose desire to pin on paper the most evanescent movements of the human machine is almost a mania. The French sculptor avoids studied poses. The model tumbles down anywhere, in any contortion or relaxation he or she wishes. Practically instantaneous is the method adopted by Rodin to preserve the fleeting attitudes, the first shiver of surfaces. He draws rapidly with his eye on the model. It is a mere scrawl, a few enveloping lines, a silhouette. But vitality is in it; and for his purposes a mere memorandum of a motion. A sculptor has made these extraordinary drawings, not a painter. It will be well to observe the distinction. He is the most rhythmic sculptor of them all. And rhythm is the codification of beauty. Because he has observed with a vision quite virginal he insists that he has affiliations with the Greeks. But if his vision is Greek his models are Parisian, while his forms are more Gothic than the pseudo-Greek of the academy. As W. C. Brownell wrote years ago: "Rodin reveals rather than constructs beauty . . . no sculptor has carried expression further; and expression means individual character completely exhibited rather than conventionally suggested." Mr. Brownell was also the first critic to point out that Rodin's art was more nearly related to Donatello than to Michael Angelo. He is in the legitimate line of French sculpture, the line of Goujon, Puget, Rude, Barye. Dalou did not hesitate to assert that the Dante portal is "one of the most, if not the most, original and astonishing pieces of sculpture of the nineteenth century."

This Dante Gate, begun more than twenty years ago, not finished yet, and probably never to be, is an astounding fugue, with death, the devil, hell, and the passions as a horribly beautiful four-voiced theme. I saw the composition a few years ago at the Rue de l'Université atelier. It is as

terrifying a conception as the Last Judgment; nor does it miss the sonorous and sorrowful grandeur of the Medici Tombs. Yet how different, how feverish, how tragic! Like all great men working in the grip of a unifying idea, Rodin modified the old technic of sculpture so that it would serve him as plastically as does sound a musical composer. A deep lover of music, his inner ear may dictate the vibrating rhythms of his forms—his marbles are ever musical; not "frozen music" as Goethe said of Gothic architecture, but silent swooning music. This gate is a Frieze of Paris, as deeply significant of modern aspiration and sorrow as the Parthenon Frieze is the symbol of the great clear beauty of Hellas. Dante inspired this monstrous and ennobled masterpiece, but Baudelaire filled many of its chinks and crannies with writhing ignoble shapes; shapes of dusky fire that, as they tremulously stand above the gulf of fears, wave ineffectual desperate hands. Heine in his Deutschland asks:

Kennst du die Hölle des Dante nicht,
Die schreckliche Terzetten?
Wen da der Dichter hineingesperrt
Den kann kein Gott mehr retten.

And from the "singing flames" of Rodin there is no rescue.

But he is not all tragedy and hell fire. Of singular delicacy, of exquisite proportions are his marbles of youth, of springtide, and the desire of life. In 1900, at his special exhibition, Paris, Europe, and America awoke to these haunting visions. Not since Keats or Swinburne has love been sung so sweetly, so romantically, so fiercely. Though he disclaims understanding the Celtic spirit, one could say that there is Celtic magic, Celtic mystery in his work. He pierces to the core the frenzy and joy of love and translates them in beautiful symbols. Nature is for him the sole theme; his works are but variations on her promptings. He

knows the emerald route and all the semitones of sensuousness. Fantasy, passion, even paroxysmal madness there are; yet what elemental power in his Adam as the gigantic first *homo* painfully heaves himself up from the earth to that posture which differentiates him from the beasts. Here, indeed, the two natures are at strife. And Mother Eve, her expression suggesting the sorrows and shames that are to be the lot of her seed; her very loins seem crushed by the ages that are hidden within them. You may walk freely about the burghers of Calais, as did Rodin when he modelled them; that is one secret of the group's vital quality. About all his statues you may walk—he is not a sculptor of one attitude, but a hewer of men and women. Consider the Balzac. It is not Balzac the writer of novels, but Balzac the prophet, the seer, the great natural force—like Rodin himself. That is why these kindred spirits converse across the years, as do the Alpine peaks in that striking parable of Turgenev's. No doubt in bronze the Balzac will arouse less wrath from the unimaginative; in plaster it produces the effect of some surging monolith of snow.

As a portraitist of his contemporaries Rodin is the unique master of character. His women are gracious, delicious masks; his men cover many octaves in virility and variety. That he is extremely short-sighted has not been dealt with in proportion to the significance of this fact. It accounts for his love of exaggerated surfaces, his formless extravagance, his indefiniteness in structural design; possibly, too, for his inability, or let us say lack of sympathy, for the monumental. He is essentially a sculptor of the intimate emotions; he delineates passion as a psychologist; and while we think of him as a cyclops wielding a huge hammer destructively, he is often ardent in his search of subtle nuance. But there is breadth even when he models an eyelid. Size is only relative. We are confronted by the paradox of an artist as torrential, as apocalyptic as Rubens and Wagner,

carving with a style wholly charming a segment of a baby's back so that you exclaim, "Donatello come to life!" His slow, defective vision, then, may have been his salvation; he seems to rely as much on his delicate tactile sense as on his eyes. His fingers are as sensitive as a violinist's. At times he seems to model tone and color. A marvellous poet, a precise sober workman of art, with a peasant strain in him like Millet, and, like Millet, very near to the soil; a natural man, yet crossed by nature with a perverse strain; the possessor of a sensibility exalted, and dolorous; morbid, sick-nerved, and as introspective as Heine; a visionary and a lover of life, very close to the periphery of things; an interpreter of Baudelaire; Dante's alter ego in his vast grasp of the wheel of eternity, in his passionate fling at nature; withal a sculptor, always profound and tortured, translating rhythm and motion into the terms of sculpture. Rodin is a statuary who, while having affinities with both the classic and romantic schools, is the most startling artistic apparition of his century. And to the century he has summed up so plastically and emotionally he has also propounded questions that only the unborn years may answer. He has a hundred faults to which he opposes one imperious excellence—a genius, sombre, magical, and overwhelining.

XVII

A NEW STUDY OF WATTEAU

New biographical details concerning Jean Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) may never be forthcoming, though theories of his enigmatic personality and fascinating art will always find exponents. Our knowledge of Watteau is confined to a few authorities: the notes in D'Argenville's Abrégé de la Vie des Plus Fameux Peintres; Catalogue Raisonné, by Gersaint; Julienne's introduction to the Life of Watteau by Count de Caylus—discovered by the Goncourts and published in their brilliant study of eighteenth-century art. Since then have appeared monographs, études, and articles by Cellier, Mollet, Hanover, Dohme, Müntz, Séailles, Claude Phillips, Charles Blanc, Virgile Joez, F. Staley, Téodor de Wyzewa, and Camille Mauclair. Mauclair is the latest and one of the most interesting commentators, his principal contribution being De Watteau à Whistler, a chapter of which has been afterward expanded into a compact little study entitled Watteau and translated from the French text by Mme. Simon Bussy, the wife of that intimate painter of twilight and poetic revery, Simon Bussy, to whom the book is dedicated.

It is the thesis put forth and cleverly maintained by Mauclair that interests us more than his succinct notation of the painter's life. It is not so novel as it is just and moderate in its application. The pathologic theory of genius has been overworked. In literature nowadays "psychiatrists" rush in where critics fear to tread. Mahomet was an epilept; so was Napoleon. Flaubert died of epilepsy, said his friends; nevertheless, René Dumesnil has proved that his sudden decease was caused not by apoplexy but by hystero-neuras-

thenia. Eye strain played hob with the happiness of Carlyle, and an apostle of sweetness and light declared that Ibsen was a "degenerate"—Ibsen, who led the humdrum exterior life of a healthy *bourgeois*. Lombroso has demonstrated—to his own satisfaction—that Dante's mystic illumination was due to some brand of mental disorder. In fact, this self-styled psychologist mapped anew the topography of the human spirit. Few have escaped his fine-tooth-comb criticism except mediocrity. Painters, poets, patriots, musicians, scientists, philosophers, novelists, statesmen, dramatists, all who ever participated in the Seven Arts, were damned as lunatics, decadents, criminals, and fools. It was a convenient inferno in which to dump the men who succeeded in the field wherein you were a failure. The height of the paradox was achieved when a silly nomenclature was devised to meet every vacillation of the human temperament. If you feared to cross the street you suffered from agoraphobia; if you didn't fear to cross the street, that too was a very bad sign. If you painted like Monet, paralysis of the optical centre had set in—but why continue?

It is a pity that this theory of genius has been so thoroughly discredited, for it is a field which promises many harvestings; there is mad genius as there are stupid folk. Besides, normality doesn't mean the commonplace. A normal man is a superior man. The degenerate man is the fellow of low instincts, rickety health, and a drunkard, criminal, or idiot. The comical part of the craze—which was short-lived, yet finds adherents among the half-baked in culture and the ignorant—is that it deliberately twisted the truth, making men of fine brain and high-strung temperament seem crazy or depraved, when the reverse is usually the case. Since the advent of Lombroso, "brain-storms" are the possession of the privileged. Naturally your grocer, tailor, or politician may display many of the above

symptoms, but no one studies them. They are not "geniuses."

All this to assure you that when Camille Mauclair assumes that the malady from which Antoine Watteau died was also a determining factor in his art, the French critic is not aping some modern men of science who denounce the writings of Dostoïevsky because he suffered from epileptic fits. But there is a happy mean in this effort to correlate mind and body. If we are what we think or what we eat —and it is not necessary to subscribe to such a belief—then the sickness of the body is reflected in the soul, or vice versa. Byron was a healthy man naturally, when he didn't dissipate, and Byron's poems are full of magnificent energy, though seldom in the key of optimism. The revolt, the passion, the scorn, were they all the result of his health? Or of his liver? Or of his soul? Goethe, the imperial, the myriad-minded Goethe, the apostle of culture, the model European man of the nineteenth century—what of him? Serenity he is said to have attained, yet from the summit of eighty years he confessed to four weeks of happiness in a long lifetime. Nor was he with all his superb manhood free from neurotic disorders, neurotic and erotic. Shelley? Ah! he is a pronounced case for the specialists. Any man who could eat dry bread, drink water, and write such angelic poetry must have been quite mad. Admitted. Would there were more Shelleys. Browning is a fair specimen of genius and normality; as his wife illustrated an unstable nervous temperament allied to genius. George Borrow was a rover, a difficult man to keep as a friend, happy only when thinking of the gypsies and quarrelling when with them. Would Baudelaire's magic verse and prose sound its faint, acrid, sinister music if the French poet had led a sensible life? Cruel question of the dilettante for whom the world, all its splendor, all its art, is but a spectacle. It is needless to continue, the list is too large; too large and too contra-

dictory. The Variations of Genius would be as profound and as vast a book as Lord Acton's projected History of Human Thought. The truth is that genius is the sacrificial goat of humanity; through some inexplicable transposition genius bears the burdens of mankind; afflicted by the burden of the flesh intensified many times, burdened with the affliction of the spirit, raised to a pitch abnormal, the unhappy man of genius is stoned because he staggers beneath the load of his sensitive temperament or wavers from the straight and narrow path usually blocked by bores too thick-headed and too obese to realize the flower-fringed abysses on either side of the road. And having sent genius in general among the goats, let us turn to consumptive genius in particular.

Watteau was a consumptive; he died of the disease. A consumptive genius! It is a hard saying. People of average health whose pulse-beat is normal in *tempo* luckily never realize the febrile velocity with which flows the blood in the veins of a sick man of genius. But there is a paradox in the case of Watteau, as there was in the case of Chopin, of Keats, of Robert Louis Stevenson. The painter of Valenciennes gave little sign of his malady on his joyous lyrical canvases. Keats sang of faëry landscapes and Chopin's was a virile spirit; the most cheerful writer under the sun was Stevenson, who even in his Pulvis et Umbra conjured up images of hope after a most pitiless arraignment of the universe and man. And here is the paradox. This quartet of genius suffered from and were slain by consumption. (Stevenson died directly of brain congestion; he was, however, a victim to lung trouble.) That the poets turn their sorrow into song is an axiom. Yet these men met death, or what is worse, met life, with defiance or impassible fronts. And the world which loves the lilting rhythms of Chopin's mazourkas seldom cares to peep behind the screen of notes for the anguish ambushed there. Watteau has painted the gay-

est scenes of pastoral elegance in a land out of time, a No-Man's Land of blue skies, beautiful women, gallant men, and lovely landscapes, while his life was haunted by thoughts of death.

The riddle is solved by Mauclair: These flights into the azure, these evocations of a country west of the sun and east of the moon, these graceful creatures of Watteau, the rich brocade of Chopin's harmonies, the exquisite pictures of Keats, the youthful joy in far-away countries of Stevenson, all, all are so many stigmata of their terrible affliction. They sought by the magic of their art to create a realm of enchantment, a realm wherein their ailing bodies and wounded spirits might find peace and solace. This is the secret of Watteau, says Mauclair, which was not yielded up in the eighteenth century, not even to his followers, Pater, Lancret, Boucher, Fragonard, whose pagan gaiety and artificial spirit is far removed from the veiled melancholy of Watteau. As we see Chopin, a slender man, morbid, sickly, strike the martial chord in an unparalleled manner, Chopin the timid, the composer of the Heroic Polonaise, so Watteau, morbid, sickly, timid, slender, composes that masterpiece of delicate and decorative joyousness, The Embarkment for Cythera, which hangs in the Louvre (a gorgeous sketch, the final version, is at Potsdam in the collection of the German Emperor). In these works we find the aura of consumption.

None of Watteau's contemporaries fathomed the meaning of his art: not Count de Caylus, not his successors, who all recognized the masterly draftsman, the marvellous colorist, the composer of pastoral ballets, of matchess *fêtes galantes,* of conversations, of miniatures depicting camp life, and fanciful decorations in the true style of his times. But the melancholy poet that was in the man, his lyric pessimism, and his unassuaged thirst for the infinite—these things they did not see. Caylus, who has left the only data

of value, speaks of Watteau's hatred of life, his aversion at times from the human face, his restlessness that caused him to seek new abodes—Chopin was always dissatisfied with his lodgings and always changing them. The painter made friends in plenty, only to break with them because of some fancied slight. Chopin was of umbrageous nature, Liszt tells us. Watteau never married and never, as far as is known, had a love affair. He is an inspired painter of women. (Perhaps, because of his celibacy.) He loved to depict them in delicious poses, under waving trees in romantic parks or in the nude. A gallant artist, he was not a gallant man. He had the genius of friendship but not the talent for insuring its continuity. Like Arthur Rimbaud, he suffered from the nostalgia of the open road. He disappeared frequently. His whereabouts was a mystery to his friends. He did not care for money or for honors. He was elected without volition on his part as a member of the Academy. Yet he did not use this powerful lever to further his welfare. Silent, a man of continent speech, he never convinced his friends that his art was chaste; yet he never painted an indelicate stroke. His personages, all disillusionized, vaguely suffer, make love without desire—disillusioned souls all. L'Indifférent, that young man in the Louvre who treads the earth with such light disdain, with such an airy expression of sweetness and *ennui,* that picture, Mauclair remarks, is the soul of Watteau. And, perhaps, spills his secret.

Mauclair does not like the coupling of Watteau's name with those of Boucher, Pater, Lancret, De Troy, Coypel, or Vanloo. They imitated him as to externals; the spirit of him they could not ensnare. If Watteau stemmed artistically from Rubens, from Ruysdael, from Titian (or Tiepolo, as Kenyon Cox acutely hints) he is the father of a great school, the true French school, though his stock is Flemish. Turner knew him; so did Bonington. Delacroix

understood him. So did Chardin, himself a solitary in his century. Without Watteau's initiative Monticelli might not be the Monticelli we know, while Claude Monet, Manet, Renoir are the genuine flowering of his experiments in the division of tones and the composition of luminous skies.

Mauclair smiles at Caylus for speaking of Watteau's mannerisms, the mannerisms that proclaim his originality. Only your academic, colorless painter lacks personal style and always paints like somebody he is not. Watteau's art is peculiarly personal. Its peculiarity—apart from its brilliancy and vivacity—is, as Mauclair remarks, "the contrast of cheerful color and morbid expression." *Morbidezza* is the precise phrase; *morbidezza* may be found in Chopin's art, in the very feverish moments when he seems brimming over with high spirits. Watteau was not a consumptive of the Pole's type. He did not alternate between ecstasy and languor. He was cold, self-contained, suspicious, and inveterately hid the state of his health. He might have been cured, but he never reached Italy, and that far-off dream and his longing to realize it may have been the basis of his last manner—those excursions into a gorgeous dreamland. He yearned for an impossible region. His visions on canvas are the shadowy sketches of this secret desire that burned him up. It may have been consumption—and Mauclair makes out a strong case—and it may have been the expression of a rare poetic temperament. Watteau was a poet of excessive sensibility as well as the contriver of dainty masques and ballets.

In literature one man at least has understood him, Walter Pater. Readers of his Imaginary Portraits need not be reminded of A Prince of Court Painters, that imaginative reconstruction of an almost obscure personality. "His words as he spoke of them [the paintings of Rubens] seemed full of a kind of rich sunset with some moving glory within it." This was the Watteau who is summed by

Pater (a distant kinsman, perhaps, of the Pater Watteau tutored) as a man who had been "a sick man all his life. He was always a seeker after something in the world, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all." Camille Mauclair eloquently ends his study with the confession that the mere utterance of Watteau's name "suffices to evoke in men's minds a memory of the melancholy that was his, arrayed in garments of azure and rose. Ah! crepuscular Psyche, whose smile is akin to tears!"

XVIII

THE REAL ISOLDE—WAGNER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I

"That I should have written Tristan I owe to you and I thank you for all eternity from the bottom of my heart."—Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck.

It was Nietzsche, was it not, who warned us against setting too much store by the autobiographies of great men? Now the autobiography of Richard Wagner still reposes inviolate in the care of his widow at Bayreuth. Yet all his life was a self-confession, whether in deed, letter, or music. Music is the most subjective of the arts, and Wagner was the most subjective composer who ever put pen to paper. Every important act of his life—one is almost tempted to add unimportant, too—was speedily recorded in tone; and his music if it could be translated into speech would tell tales compared to which other modern tragedies might pale their romantic fires.

To write a music drama like Tristan and Isolde, to paint in tones its swirling undertow of passion and guilt, demands a poet-composer who must feel first, subjectively at least, a tithe of the sensations he attempts to depict. The greatest love story in the world—for it is more complete and vaster in its consequences than the unhappy loves of Paolo and Francesca—set to the thrilling musical-dramatic score, is what Richard Wagner accomplished in Tristan and Isolde; and to achieve the gigantic task he underwent the tortures of an unhappy love second only in intensity to his music. What the man put into his music he had experi-

enced. His drama throbs at times like an open wound, as did the souls of the enraptured pair in real life. This proceeding of poets and composers—perhaps of mathematicians and philosophers if we could but interpret their work—is as old as mankind. Goethe embalmed his loves in deathless verse and thus eased the aching pain of his heart—better say hearts! Heine made of the formula a tiny exquisite lyric, and at last the higher criticism is beginning to suspect that Shakespeare, who conceived Hamlet and Iago, Lear and Macbeth, Ophelia and Juliet, was himself made up of the elements of all these and a myriad other characters. Browning averred that it was the lesser Shakespeare who wrote the sonnets; all the worse for Browning's judgment. It may have been the lesser Wagner who almost disrupted the Wesendonck household; but why should we complain! We are the gainers. Have we not a precious possession in Tristan and Isolde? This is the pagan view of the situation, not the ethical one.

Nearly all the Wagner biographers have slurred the details of the musician's life at Zürich from 1853 to 1858. The reason is a simple one: those who knew the facts were not allowed to or would not divulge them, and those who did not know perforce left an unexplained gap. Occasional rumors were blown by the wind of surmise about the globe. Every one has since been corroborated in the published letters of Wagner and Madame Wesendonck and the Bélart study. These letters are volcanic on Wagner's side, though he does speak much of the weather and his pains; the few included in the volume of Mathilde are by no means passionate. One more love affair in the career of a musical Ishmael like Wagner need not particularly interest the world. But this one, the Zürich episode, is of prime æsthetic importance. It gave birth to a magnificent music drama and its outcome made of Wagner again a wanderer, without a home. For a time he had been an anchored para-

site in the household of the amiable Otto Wesendonck, and it is safe to assert that if the love and its subsequent catastrophe had not occurred we should have been the poorer of a masterpiece, perhaps several; for Die Walküre was written at Zürich, as were parts of Die Meistersinger, Siegfried, even Parsifal—that bizarre compound of rickety Buddhism and *bric-à-brac* Christianity—was planned, so rich and ripening were the influences of this love upon the fecund brain of Wagner. He began the music of Rheingold in 1853, finished it in 1854; and the June of that year began Die Walküre, finished in 1856; worked over Siegfried and finished several acts by 1857; from 1857 to 1858 was busy with Tristan, wrote the five songs—words by Mathilde Wesendonck—and in 1859 finished Tristan. It is no exaggeration then to say that these five years were the most significant in Wagner's life, the very flowering of his genius.

So much for statistics. These tiresome figures are given to prove that Wagner himself, and following him, the majority of his biographers, created the impression that his second spouse, Cosima Liszt, the divorced wife of Hans von Bülow, was the one passion of his lifetime, the mainspring of his music, the Eternal Feminine at whose loving command the little wizard wrought his miracles in tone. So were we all educated to believe this. Did not Richard Wagner swear to the fact many times? Did he not lay his hand on his heart and solemnly assure the world that to Cosima, his well-beloved, he owed all? And in doing so he was only as human as the rest of his sex—the last woman usually counts the most in the life of a man; this natural fact possibly gave birth to the proverb about straws on the back of camels. Some day the demigod nonsense about this composer will be entirely dissipated and then behold—a man will emerge, with all a man's failings and virtues. Ernest Newman has knocked Wagner's philosophical pre-

tensions to smithereens, as did Dmitri Merejkowsky the hollow sham of Tolstoy's prophetic and religious vaporings. So the official autobiography of Wagner given to the world does not after all paint for us the composer's true portrait.

Therefore, it was not Cosima Wagner, but Mathilde Wesendonck who started Wagner's imaginative machinery whirring. And the most singular part about the mutual letters of Richard and Mathilde is that they were issued with the official stamp of Bayreuth. That Madame Wagner permitted this at once makes us suspicious. How many letters are not in the collection, for there are many unaccountable omissions in this apparently frank volume! Let us relate the main facts. Wagner had been in love with Mathilde Wesendonck, the wife of a wealthy Zürich merchant, for six years. This is stated in a letter to the lady dated August 21, 1858. He met her in 1852, and a year later they were both immersed in a sea of passion and trouble. Yet we have been told by Glasenapp and Chamberlain that Wagner only fell in love with her in 1857, when he lived in a small cottage, "on the green hillock," close by Wesendonck's stately villa. Hans Bélart, in his Richard Wagner in Zürich, published some years ago, was very frank in his disclosures of the affair, treating Wagner as if he were the veriest ingrate and home-wrecker; whereas, if Otto Wesendonck had cared to put his foot down, the intrigue, probably platonic, would have been soon stopped. But he did not choose to do so, and why is not discoverable in the letters that Wagner wrote Madame Wesendonck, or Otto Wesendonck—that is, in the published letters. What Wagner thought of this husband we may see in the figure of King Marke in Tristan and Isolde, who sings: "O Tristan!" so sonorously and so sorrowfully when he discovers the pair.

The sad side of the story was not Wesendonck, but Wag-

ner's wife, Minna Planer-Wagner, who, sick, old, and neglected, ate her bread in sorrow at his table, a table provided by the bounty of others. She knew that Mathilde's influence had become paramount, and the letters and diaries of Wagner are full of naïve complaints of her selfishness! "Destiny dooms me; having been constantly too good, and having submitted always, I have spoiled my wife so that her demands on me are becoming impossible." The principal demand was only for his love—impossible, indeed. He dedicated the Walküre prelude to Mathilde in 1854. In the original poem of Gottfried of Strasburg, the potion it is which arouses Tristan and Isolde to their fatal undoing.

Mathilde, with a keener precision than Wagner of the psychologic possibilities of the situation, caused him to change this rather mechanical operation of fate to the mutual glances of the lovers. "His eyes on mine were fastened."

Minna did not like this spiritual friendship. She was a simple soul, and the complexity of her husband's genius, its many voracious tentacles groping in the void for sympathy—is not genius always selfishly cruel!—made her miserable. And then, worst of all, she did not comprehend his music. Rienzi was her favorite. Its theatric pomp and post-Meyerbeerian brass-bands were to her, educated as an actress, the acme of greatness. Rienzi, too, made money. It was popular. She loathed Walküre; she declared that "It is an erotic and an immoral stupidity." Of the latter drama she wrote from Dresden, where she went for a cure: "They—Tristan and Isolde—remain nevertheless a couple too amorous." Fancy Robert Browning misunderstood by his poet wife. What tragedy is all this. Minna did not suspect the greatness of her little lord, who shook off his early operas with disgust. The future was to be his—and who was to pay the rent? quoth Minna. Ah, these practical wives of men of genius—why will they persist in feed-

ing and lodging their husbands! Poor women—no Daudet has ever espoused their cause, has sung their praises!

In the letter alluded to there occur the most damaging charges. (This letter, or for that matter many of the following details, are naturally not in the letters of Wagner and Madame Wesendonck.) Minna writes:

"The fatal Tristan, which decidedly I do not care for (though not because of the reasons of its origins) is, I think, coming laboriously into the world, with long periods of intermission and great efforts! It seems to me that the travail under such conditions cannot be a happy one. The news of the death of the little Guido, youngest son of the Wesendoncks, has depressed me terribly. I believe it is but the dispensation of Providence that God visits affliction on this heartless woman, spoiled by a happy life. How many times have I hoped that the Lord would bring about a change in her through sickness of one of her children; but see! I still tremble with the terror of the thought."

"Reasons of its origins!" "Heartless woman!" These are strong phrases. In the meantime Wagner up at the villa—Minna at the cottage—was revelling in the bliss of a sympathetic soul. A beautiful creature, young, intellectual, poetic, Mathilde was a prolific author. Not only did she write five poems which were set by Wagner for soprano voice and piano, but dramas, Märchen, poems, epic and lyric, puppet-plays. Her muse was inspired by such themes as Frederick the Great, Edith, Gudrun—three dramas of hers—and also by the rhythms of music. Her work reads rather commonplace nowadays, though fluent in the romantic imagery of her time. To Wagner it must have appealed, for two of the five songs, In the Hothouse and Dreams, he called Studies for Tristan and Isolde. Dreams was utilized in the duo of the second act of Tristan, while in the prelude to the third we recognize the profile of In the Hothouse.

Of rare culture then, Mathilde Wesendonck caught the many-colored soul of Richard Wagner up into a fiery cloud, and only did he return to earth when Minna complained or his purse grew light. How the Wagners lived at this period was never exactly known until the recollections of the composer Roberd Freihern von Hornstein were published. Wagner was comfortably housed. For form's sake he paid a nominal rental. Every year from his friend Alexander von Ritter's mother he received eight hundred thalers. His Zürich admirer, Jacob Sulzer, looked after the table; a sportsman, he weekly sent him fish and game. The wine came from Wesendonck's cellar. Brockhaus, the publisher, gave him royalties on his books. And there were *tantièmes* from early operas. Von Hornstein relates that somehow or other money always flowed in—was there not Franz Liszt, golden-hearted Liszt! Elegance, plenty, refined surroundings, company— Ah, the Wagner legend pales day by day, that charming legend of his continual poverty! He had friends rich and eager to assist him. The only mortifying thing there is to note is that so many of these friends have since told the world how they helped the struggling genius. Always let the world, as well as your right and left hand, know how much you lend, seems to have been the motto of this band. Liszt was the exception. He gave like a prince of the Renaissance and never took heed of his bounty. I, for one, am glad that Wagner accepted assistance. If ever the world owed a man a living, he was that man. We should be grateful to those who helped him to the leisure which gave us masterpieces—only wondering at the bad taste displayed by some in publishing their generosity.

Gossip began to breed. Minna's attitude toward Mathilde was that of the implacably jealous wife. Von Bülow wrote Richter in 1858 that Wagner was financially embarrassed, "something occurred between him and Wesen-

donck." And Wagner hints to a friend: "I have good reasons for not asking him"—Wesendonck—"to aid me." Liszt's Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein was called by the friends of both the enamoured ones, and replied, as might have been expected: "I do not believe the worst. But even should this be, one can say honestly that in this world everything is relative, even justice and fidelity. . . . We truly say that genius belongs to all the world, and that every one claims his portion." Spoken like a merciful woman—and also as one rowing in the same boat with Mathilde Wesendonck.

The crash occurred in 1858. It was not unexpected. Otto Wesendonck's patience had been sorely tried. He loved Wagner, the man, and adored the genius of the musician. But there were limits. His wife gave a concert at the villa in 1858 and Wagner conducted. It was an event; musicians came from Germany to hear the new music of the exiled revolutionist. He was presented with a gold baton. It was the gift of Mathilde and supposedly from Paris. Herr Siber, a Zürich goldsmith, made it and told the story to Bélart of the pious deception practised by the donor. Evidently Mathilde knew her Richard! Liszt was expected to visit Zürich August 20. When he arrived, great was his amazement to find that Wagner had left three days before, left precipitately, better say fled the city. Why? Silence again, even in these new letters. In 1859 Mathilde wrote that Wagner had left "voluntarily." She continues: "But what is the use of questioning birds? We have commemorated that event in Tristan and Isolde. The rest is silence."

But it was not silence. The facts are these—never printed until Bélart, through his dogged industry, unearthed them. The day of August 11, 1858, Minna Wagner went to Otto Wesendonck's villa, and after telling the mistress of the establishment what she thought of her, she informed the

husband of the state of affairs as she believed them to be. Wesendonck sent for Wagner. What happened then only two men could tell and they never did, though Wesendonck curtly informed Wagner's curious friends that he had advised the composer to leave the town. Broken-hearted Wagner asked Mathilde: "Where Tristan is going wilt thou Isolde follow?" But there were children and a comfortable home and a reputation to be considered—Isolde did not wave the burning signal torch, and the miserable man left after borrowing from Sulzer money enough to get to Geneva. There old Jakob Susstrunk, the barber, gave him the necessary means for a further flight to Venice. In Venice he arrived, sick, almost penniless, alone, all that he loved in Zürich, the future a wall of despair.

He has related his experiences. While confined to his bed, the plaintive cry of a gondolier on a lonely canal gave him the piping of the shepherd in Tristan—at death's door, the instinct of the artist was not subdued. He noted down the melody, as he also registered for future use the heart-throbs of his passion and Isolde's.

Wagner fell to keeping a diary. This he sent from time to time to Zürich. Mathilde answered discreetly. Otto was evidently in the secret, and his jealousy appeased. Doubtless he said to himself after the manner of fatuous musical amateurs: "It is a great thing that my wife has inspired the harmless passion of an extraordinary composer." At any rate, the correspondence which languished ceased, was renewed, and lasted until 1871. In the interim, Wagner had met Ludwig of Bavaria, and become famous, had seen Cosima von Bülow and stolen her from her husband; had, after the death of Minna in 1866—poor sacrificed Minna!—married Cosima, and the old romance went up in smoke. Wagner had plotted suicide in Venice; luckily he changed his mood. A perfect final cadence this self-murder would have been for the greatest romance of his life. That it

ended in chilly proprieties; that he wrote Mathilde, adding a postscript, regards from Cosima; that Siegfried, his son, was years later petted in the household of Mathilde (Wagner died in 1883; Mathilde in 1902, a widow since 1896; she was born 1828)—subtle are the ways Life, the comedian, has of ending our little frenzies. "Auf Wiedersehen! Auf Wiedersehen! Soul of my soul, farewell! Auf Wiedersehen!" wrote Wagner before he left Zürich. He did not believe it was a genuine farewell; but the Comic Spirit, which, according to George Meredith, enjoys the merry hamstringing of our destinies, took Wagner at his word, and though he saw Mathilde once more, the two were doomed to remain apart, and, tragic comedians that they were, to end their lives in the odor of respectable married folk; Tristan and Isolde settled down in bourgeois comfort—but not together! Destiny shook the dice and made of these two rebels conventional tax-payers and not citizens of eternity. Perhaps Paolo and Francesca, those contemporaries of the stars, were braver.

II

WAGNER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

If the long-expected autobiography of Richard Wagner, My Life, had appeared after the death of Cosima Wagner a cynic would have been justified in saying that the composer's widow was indulging in a posthumous revenge. Certainly nothing he ever wrote in his voluminous literary works has produced in the minds of his readers so definite an impression of meanness and mightiness as do these memoirs. The marked impression is that Wagner was more Mime and Alberich, even Fafner, than Siegfried or Tristan or Wotan. His contemporaries have described Will Shakespeare as a lovable man, both merry and melancholy in his moods. We like to think of him as a Hamlet or a

Prospero. But Wagner kept all that was great, noble, poetic for his scores; in his private life he often behaved like a malicious, a malignant monkey. He lied. He whimpered when he begged, and he was always begging. He invariably deceived women attracted by his genius and a magnetic personality. And he abused every friend he ever had, abused them when living and after death in this book. A singularly repulsive, fascinating man and a brave one. What was his reason for giving to the world so unflattering a portrait of himself?

In his lifetime he made enemies daily because of his venomous tongue. Some evil fairy bestowed upon him the gift of saying aloud what was in his mind, and not infrequently he hit the nail on the head, told the truth in high places where concealment would have been a virtue. He was a moral or immoral typhoon that swept away the evil and good alike in its elemental fury.

I

We are informed that between the years 1868 and 1873 Wagner compiled these memoirs from diaries and other memoranda which he had preserved for thirty-five years. He dictated from these notes to Cosima and, it is said, to Ludwig II of Bavaria. The book was set up by French compositors who did not understand German; twelve copies were printed and the type then distributed. Of these twelve copies eight were held by his wife and four were entrusted among some other friends. It is a significant fact that Friedrich Nietzsche read the proofs of the work, and while he never broke the seal of secrecy his knowledge of the peculiar Wagner psychology enabled him to write his later attacks on the master from superior vantage-ground. Strictly speaking, there is less novelty in My Life than we had expected. The earlier biographies by Glasenapp and

Henry T. Finck, the last-named being the best in English and ranking with the best in German, not to mention Wagner's own writings, contain much that is here retold by the composer. The funeral ceremonies of Weber, the story of Spontini, the first performances of Liebesverbot and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and a score of other anecdotes have long since been in print. What is fresh is the details of Wagner's childhood, his courting of and marriage with Minna Planer, and the account of his first meetings with Cosima Liszt, then the wife of his dearest friend and worshipper Hans von Bülow. What he has omitted—or is it the fault of Bayreuth?—would fill two more volumes of the same size as these. He slurs over the Wesendonck affair, which is all the more curious because only a few years ago Bayreuth permitted, nay edited, the publication of the Wagner-Wesendonck correspondence, chiefly his letters. Furthermore Wagner, the friend of kings when he died, seems to have forgotten completely his share in the Dresden uprising of 1849. That he was a red-hot revolutionist is proved by his Art and Revolution. An intimate friend of that sombre, enigmatic nihilist Bakunin (Bakounine is the better spelling), Wagner it was who inducted the harmless Roeckel into the movement, and not, as he vaguely insinuates, he who was led away by Roeckel. Ferdinand Praeger's Wagner as I Knew Him is a document of profound value, one that was not invalidated by Ashton Ellis's pamphlet entitled, 1849; a Vindication. But after all Wagner was only an amateur socialist.

All the composers of his day, the big as well as the little, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Spohr, Marschner, Spontini, Hiller, Berlioz, were attacked by Wagner, who saw with the clairvoyant's eye of hatred and with a touch of his baneful pen transformed them into mean, grotesque, even vile personalities. Heine didn't escape, nor Hebbel and Auerbach. But all this is the obverse side of the medal,

as we shall presently see. This little, selfish monster of genius, sickly, puny in size, his mask of appalling ugliness, bowlegged (he wore a long cloak to hide this defect, for, as he said, he didn't wish to be taken for a Jew), with large, protuberant blue eyes, from which at times gleamed the most extraordinary fire; this stunted man, hated and despised, nevertheless could make himself very attractive. He was full of fun and boyish antics to old age. Praeger relates that when in London conducting the stodgy Philharmonic Orchestra Wagner's exuberance took the form of standing on his head. Wagner never grew up; his was a case of arrested moral development. He retained the naïve spites and vanities and savageries of his boyhood, while his intellect and emotional development had become those of a superman. He neither forgot nor forgave. He was Dantesque in his memory of personal affronts, and if he couldn't put all his adversaries in hell, as did the Italian poet, he remembered them in his autobiography, and in at least one instance he transferred the personality of a hostile critic into the scene of Die Meistersinger—Beckmesser is a supposed portrait of Eduard Hanslick, the Vienna music critic. Hanslick was present when the poem was read, and Wagner relates that he left deeply offended. Is it anything to wonder over? Nor is it surprising that Hanslick too never forgot. A trait of Wagner's is his constant amazement when a man or a woman he has insulted or betrayed dares to manifest feelings of retaliation. In these matters he is genuinely childish. To the very end, despite his imperial success, he never succeeded in bringing his inner nature into harmony with the external world. A man of genius, he was a stranger in his own land to the end.

We have said that the significant portions of these memoirs are set forth not in those sections that deal with the artist's psychology but in his purely human relations. Of him it might be said that nothing inhuman was foreign to

him. And we propose to deal with this side of him. Mr. Finck has painted a very sympathetic portrait, while Glasenapp is too much of Bayreuth to offer the entire truth. It is a pity that the monumental life begun by the late Hon. Mrs. Burrell was not finished. It is not printed but engraved throughout and illustrated in facsimiles of every document quoted. A copy is in the British Museum, and the original is in the possession of her husband. As a critic has said, "many as have been the biographies of the composer, and loud as has been the chorus of praise bestowed upon each, it was reserved for Mrs. Burrell to establish the accurate form of his mother's maiden name." My Life, notwithstanding its revelation of a mean, tricky, lofty soul, one that wavered along the scale from Caliban to Prospero, will rank among the great autobiographies of literature. Its place on the shelf will be between Benvenuto Cellini and Goethe. (Wahrheit und Dichtung aus Meinem Leben.) The irresponsible sculptor and the wise poet—surely Wagner had in him something of the stuff of both. Unmoral, reckless, consumed by the loftiest of ideals, shoving aside all that opposed him, breaking faith with man and woman alike, turning his sorrows into passionate song, vainglorious and cowardly, lustful and outrageous for his ideal, always keeping his star in view, he was kin to Cellini and he was kin to Goethe. The world will not willingly let die such a book as this.

II

Nietzsche wrote some time about 1887–88, "Was Wagner German at all? We have some reason for asking this. It is difficult to discern in him any German trait whatever. Being a great learner, he has learned to imitate much that is German; that is all. His character itself is in opposition to what has hitherto been regarded as German, not to speak

of the German musician! His father was a stage-player named Geyer. A Geyer is almost an Adler (Jewish names both). What has hitherto been put into circulation as the Life of Wagner is *fable convenue,* if not worse. I confess my distrust of every point which rests solely on the testimony of Wagner himself. He had not pride enough for any truth whatever about himself; nobody was less proud; he remained just like Victor Hugo, true to himself even in biographical matters—he remained a stage-player." Elsewhere Nietzsche warns us against the autobiographies of great men.

"His father was a stage-player named Geyer." Coming from Nietzsche this statement is not surprising, for he had read these memoirs while at Villa Triebschen. Why then, it will be asked, does this fact not appear in the first page of the autobiography? Despite asseverations to the contrary we suspect that Bayreuth edited not wisely but too well. Others besides Nietzsche had seen the opening line of the work: "I am the son of Ludwig Geyer." The late Felix Mottl, in the presence of several well-known music critics of New York city, declared in 1904 that he had read the above statement. He also told the same story to German journalists. Mr. Finck as long ago as 1896 informed the present writer that at Wahnfried one could see the portrait of Ludwig Geyer, Wagner's "step-father," and of Wagner's mother, but not a sign of the real (or putative) father. This statement we personally corroborated. Now this doesn't prove that Richard Wagner was of Jewish descent, though there is a strong reason for believing that the versatile Geyer, painter, poet, musician, and actor, may have had Jewish blood in his veins. To tell the truth, Wagner's mother displayed more marked Hebraic lineaments; her name was Bertz, as Mrs. Burrell discovered. Stranger still is the fact that Richard Geyer, as he was known at school, looks more like the Wagners than Geyer; he re-

sembles his elder brother, a veritable Wagner, much more than he does his half (or whole) sister, Cecilia Geyer. So the physiognomists must make of this anomaly what they will. Of course the chief point of interest is Wagner's chronic hatred of the Jews, and his attack on the Jewish element in music.

If the Geyer story be the truth, then the music of Wagner, sensuous, Oriental, brilliant, pompous, richly colored, is Jewish, more Jewish than the music of Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, or Goldmark. But let us see what the original of this contention has to say himself on the subject.

Of Wagner's own opinion concerning his paternity he leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader. Before such frankness the most seasoned will quail. Sir William Davenant is said to have blackened the memory of his mother in his not very laudable endeavor to prove that he was the natural son of William Shakespeare. Possibly that is why he is known to posterity as "Rare Sir William Davenant." Perhaps Wagner, in his anxiety to demonstrate that his father was a man of lively talents, hinted that his supposed father, Friedrich Wagner, was too much away from home of nights and that "even when the police official, his father, was spending his evenings at the theatre, the worthy actor, Ludwig Geyer, generally filled his place in the family circle, and it seems had frequently to appease my mother, who, rightly or wrongly, complained of her husband." This is simply breath-catching. "Seems, good mother." Was there ever such a Hamlet-son to such a queen-mother? Geyer married her and her big brood after the elder Wagner had gone to another world. Richard was not called Richard Wagner till the age of fourteen. He was born May 22, 1813, in Leipsic. The house was once a Judengasse, and is now the quarter of the fur merchants.

Geyer did not live long. He took the liveliest interest in Richard, especially when he suspected that the boy had

musical ability. The mother of Wagner came from Weissenfels, and she told her son that her parents had been bakers there; later authorities say mill-owners. There was an air of mystery surrounding her antecedents, perhaps because of some personal caprice. She would never give the correct spelling of her name, Perthes, not Bertz, being then the accepted form. A "Weimar prince" had seen to her education at a high-class Leipsic boarding-school. More romantics! That she was a clever, witty, well-educated woman there is no doubt. Harassed by poverty and a large family, she contrived through all of it to keep her head above water. Wagner writes that "her chief characteristics seem to have been a keen sense of humor and an amiable temper, so we need not suppose that it was merely a sense of duty toward the family of a departed comrade that afterward induced the admirable Ludwig Geyer to enter into matrimony with her when she was no longer youthful, but rather that he was impelled to that step by a sincere and warm regard for the widow of his friend." Wagner always spoke better of Geyer than of his father or mother.

The first volume is in two parts. Part I, 1813 to 1842, is devoted to his childhood and school-days, musical studies, travels in Germany, first marriage, and Paris, 1839 to 1842. Part II is devoted to the years in Dresden, 1842 to 1850, and comprises descriptions of Rienzi, The Flying Dutchman, Liszt, Spontini, Marschner, Tannhäuser, Franck, Schumann, Semper, the architect; Gutzkow, Auerbach, Lohengrin, Spohr, Gluck, Heller, Devrient, his mother's death, Bakunin and the May insurrection, his flight to Weimar, Zürich, Paris, Bordeaux, Geneva, and again to Zürich. The prose style of the original, not of the English translation, is free from Wagner's accustomed obscurities and clogged sentences, which we meet in his pretentious and turgid studies of music and the drama. Doubtless

Cosima, aided by Nietzsche, made these memoirs presentable, for Wagner, while a copious writer, is absolutely devoid of ear for the finer harmonies of prose; indeed, his prose is only one degree worse than the doggerel he too often calls poetry.

His childhood was spent in dreams. He was very sensitive to things that terrified, such as ghosts, shadows, and the whole battery of German fairy tales. He read Hoffman's stories and they did him no good. He composed tragedies in the style of Hamlet and Lear; he adored Weber and Freischütz; but the major impression of his life was Beethoven's Fidelio. Later came the symphonies and the string quartets; yet the opera was, musically speaking, Wagner's starting-point. What will be matter of surprise to many is the fact that Wagner was no middle-aged student of music, as has been generally understood. He was always studying, only he began earlier than musical histories have told us. He was not a prodigy; he never half mastered the technic of the pianoforte, an instrument which he cursed, yet could never satisfactorily compose unless at the key-board, and sang like a crow. He began with Müller and ended with Weinlig in theory. He had composed a pianoforte sonata by nineteen. He wrote songs. He longed to be a composer of opera. He was omnivorous in his reading, but passed his school examinations with difficulty if at all. In a word, a lad of genius who was determined to seek such spiritual nourishment as he craved and none other. No wonder his schoolmasters shook their heads. At the university he indulged in all the student vices. His particular adventures as a gambler, while dramatic, even thrilling, sound a trifle too much like French fiction to be credible. Petted by his sisters, alternately spoiled and neglected by a capricious though well-meaning mother, Wagner's home-life made up in affection what it lacked in discipline. His life long he was to feel the loss of a father,

who would have shaped his conduct as well as his genius.

His mother could not endure the notion of a theatrical career for her son—her dislike of the theatre was well grounded—so she allowed him to become a musician. He literally began conducting before he could read a score. However, the operas he waved his wand over were by Auber and Donizetti, and no doubt the youthful leader used a piano partition. At Lauchstadt he met Minna Planer, a pretty, vivacious actress. Wagner was the musical director of the Magdeburg Theatre Company, of which Minna was also a member. They were both young; they loved, and oddly enough it was Richard who urged a legitimate union. The lady had been imprudent so often that it did not occur to her that any one would be foolish enough to marry her. She had a past, a daughter, Nathalie, being one of its witnesses. Wagner knew this. He tells, not without a certain gusto, the sordid story of her life, her early seduction. Why in the name of all that is decent he should dwell upon such details we may only wonder. If it is to blacken the memory of an unhappy woman who was his best, his only friend through the most awful trials, well and good; base as is the motive, it is at least understandable. But while this aspersion puts Cosima on a pedestal it lowers Wagner, for he confesses he took the woman for better or worse; that after she ran away from him with a certain Dietrich he received her back; he accepted the illegitimate child; he accepted her doubtful temper, her ignorance, finally her tippling and drug-eating habits. At times he behaved like an angel of light. He forgave so much that you wonder that he didn't forgive all. Minna was not a companion for a man of sensitive nerves, as was Richard. What other woman would have been? And those critics who, inspired by Bayreuth, attack the unfortunate actress should remember that she it was who washed his linen in Paris during the three dark years from 1839 to 1842; who cooked, slaved,

and saved for him; who stood with rock-bottom fortitude his terrific outbursts, his peevishness, his fickleness.

It is a risky business, this judging the respective rights and wrongs of a husband and wife; nevertheless justice should be done Minna. He did not love her long; yet such a dance of death did this self-absorbed musician fiddle for his weary spouse that one reads with relief of her death, not described in these memoirs. Goethe, the superb and icy egoist, as is commonly supposed, broke down entirely at the death of his wife, Christiane Vulpius, an uneducated woman of intemperate habits, pretty but of common clay. Kneeling at her bedside and seizing her hands cold in death, this so-called impassive poet and voluptuary cried: "Thou wilt not forsake me! No, no; thou must not forsake me!" And Goethe was a greater poet than Wagner and a greater man. But Wagner was only too glad to be relieved of his matrimonial burden. He was already the lover of his friend's wife.

III

Perhaps Cosima may enlighten the world some day as to the methods she employed in managing her hitherto untamable spouse. Past fifty, past the storm and stress of a life rich in miseries and economical in its distribution of favors, Wagner knew that he was in safe harbor after he became the friend of the King. Cosima knew it too. Von Bülow was an exacting husband. Ferdinand Lassalle has described Cosima as a pedant in petticoats, though a true daughter of Liszt in her brilliancy and personal charm. She saw that Von Bülow would always remain a pianist, a very dry, though intellectual artist; that the future was Wagner's. She did not hesitate to sacrifice all, her husband, her father, and she went off with Wagner. Nietzsche, who later was intimate in this circle, must there have

formed his conception of supermen and superwomen. Nothing counted but personal inclination; Siegmund and Sieglinde, Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Tristan and Isolde—each a law to himself, to herself. Poor Liszt was shocked not alone because of the moral aspect of the case, but because of the unhappiness brought upon his favorite pupil, Von Bülow; last and principally, Cosima to remarry had to become a Protestant.

Wagner describes his growing love for Cosima. Once it took the freakishly sentimental desire to lift her into a wheel-barrow and wheel her home. Hardly Teutonic this, as Nietzsche would have said. (Nietzsche did not come off without scars in his friendship for Cosima. He, so it was asserted by competent authorities, loved her more than he did the music of Richard.) Minna was cognizant of the growing intrigue between her man and the other woman. She must have been quite broken by this time, for she had gone through the Wesendonck affair and it must be confessed had come off with flying colors in that stormy encounter. After the Dresden revolution Wagner, who had only manipulated the church-bells and had risked his friend Roeckel's life by sending him across the line for a water-ice, the day being hot, fled to Weimar, where he enjoyed for a few days the hospitality of Franz Liszt and his Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein at their house on the hill overlooking the river Ilm, called the Altenburg. Naturally he says little of how he repaid his hosts at a banquet given in his honor. He abused all the guests, got drunk, and was only brought to his senses when Liszt threatened him with expulsion if he didn't apologize to Von Bülow, Tausig, Cornelius, and the others. He knew Liszt too well to hesitate, and did as he was told; therefore Liszt, Liszt who gave Lohengrin its first production, who sent Wagner thousands of dollars, who furnished him musical ideas, also a devoted spouse, Cosima, Liszt is shown in anything but flattering

colors in this book. Verily Wagner was obsessed by the evil angel of truth-telling. Like the little child in Hans Andersen's story, he always saw the king naked. And this, whether we like his ingratitude or not, may constitute in the future the weightiest value to his utterances.

But, honest to the point of shocking, he exhibits a clam-like reticence in a quarter where he might have been more expansive. Not that his comparative silence regarding his relations at Zürich with the Wesendoncks was actuated by any awakened sense of chivalry. No, his letters reveal the reverse. The truth is he cut a poor figure in that ugly episode. He tells his story as obliquely as he dare, but the facts are against him. There were too many witnesses for him to prevaricate, and we wonder that Frau Cosima printed this present story when the Wagner-Wesendonck letters (and Wagner's words) do so contradict the autobiography.

If readers of My Life when disgusted by the pettiness of the author would only recollect that this pigmy with the giant brain gave us the sublime last act of Götterdämmerung—as sublime as a page from Æschylus or an act from King Lear; gave us the Shakespearean humor, fantasy, and rich humanity of Die Meistersinger, and, finally, the glowing love poem of Tristan and Isolde, then Wagner the sorely beset and erring mortal would be forgotten in Wagner the Titan. We smile at John Ruskin's attempt to prove that only a moral man can produce great art. Alas! What would he have said of Richard Wagner? Therefore, why should we sit in judgment on the man? His temperament was abnormal, his health wretched. He was all intellect and emotion, and if in his last years he became unduly sentimental over the sufferings of dogs and guinea-pigs, also became a vague socialist, and indulged in some decidedly queer pranks during the Ludwig affair, we had better set it down to the strain of his early years, to his age, as was

the Tolstoy case, and to his protracted conflict for his ideals. And what a glorious fighter he was! In the deepest despair he would rouse himself and begin anew, and this lasted over thirty years. You forgive his childlike enjoyment of luxury when it did come, after his fiftieth year. He was a "wicked" man like Tolstoy in his youth; both ended in a vapor of sentimental humanitarianism, though Wagner remained "harder"—in the Nietzschean sense.

We confess to finding the second volume—a trifle less interesting than the first. It ranges from 1850 to 1861; the entire work is over nine hundred pages, and deals with the Nibelungen Ring, Zürich, Liszt, Schopenhauer, London, Venice, the various stadia in the progress of Tristan and Isolde, Weimar, Paris, and the fiasco of Tannhäuser, Vienna, and again Zürich, Stuttgart, and finally Munich. He had to flee Vienna because of debts, although he insulted a wealthy Jewish banker by borrowing one thousand gulden from him, giving a banquet to singers and musicians, and when the banker visited him, calling down the stairs: "No dirty Jews are admitted." This phrase "dirty Jew" was often on Wagner's tongue. He insulted the great conductor Herman Levi thus. He mocked Tichhatschek, the tenor, who "created" his Rienzi, and retailed scandal about his early idol, Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient, who was said to be fond of handsome young officers. Wagner spared no one. Karl Ritter, whose mother did so much for him, giving him an annual pension; Van Hornstein, who refused him at the last a huge sum; Princess Metternich, Duc de Morny, Louis Napoleon, all lent him large sums, as did Otto Wesendonck, yet he mentions them coldly. His brothers-in-law, Brockhaus and Avenarius, he slights for the same reason—they refused him money. To discover the real Wagner read the Liszt-Wagner correspondence. The two men stand revealed, Liszt, the antipodes of Wagner, noble, patient, always giving, always praising or encourag-

ing, seldom criticising. And it may be confessed that at this period Wagner's feelings toward Liszt, as shown in the letters, are edifying. He was not altogether spoiled, else so many people wouldn't have loved, have worshipped him. Adversities, if they strengthened the keystone of his art, made his temper unbearable. But no idiosyncrasy can be summoned as an apology for his behavior in the Jessie Laussot affair at Bordeaux. And he tells it all so disinterestedly.

By temperament pessimistic, nevertheless in his artistic theories Wagner was an optimist. He had begun as a disciple in philosophy of Feuerbach, but a copy of The World as Will and Representation, by Arthur Schopenhauer, topsy-turvied the composer, whose later poems became tinged with the world-woe (Weltschmerz) of the cynical sage of Frankfort. This pessimism was personal in Wagner's case; it was not so much Weltschmerz as Selbstschmerz (self-pity). He sent the poem of The Ring to Schopenhauer, who abused it heartily to his disciples. Yet Wagner writes with smirking self-satisfaction that Schopenhauer had been much impressed. How much impressed he was we all know now. He pencilled at the end of the first act of Die Walküre, where the stage direction is "quick curtain!"—"high time" (höchste Zeit). Schopenhauer, who admired the music of Rossini and blew plaintive melodies on the flute, disliked the incest theme in Die Walküre, and even denied the composer any musical ability whatever. Possibly this same Schopenhauer, whose chief work also opened the eyes of Nietzsche, was at the close one of the causes of the break between Wagner and his ardent apostle, the author of that brilliant, enthusiastic book, Richard Wagner in Bayreuth.

Nietzsche had outgrown Schopenhauer when the music festival of 1876 inaugurated the opening of the Bayreuth music drama. His Wagner-worship had begun to wane;

he saw his god in the full glare of worldly glory and he noted the feet of clay, noted that the ex-revolutionist of 1849 bowed very low to royalty, and also realized that Wagner did not propose to share his throne, not even the lowest step, with any one. He left Bayreuth thoroughly disillusionized, though he joined the Wagner family at Sorrento the following November. He published his Thoughts Out of Season, and there were those who detected the tiny rift in the lute of friendship. Wagner too felt the coolness, but he wrote Nietzsche a brief, cordial letter. In 1878 appeared Human, All Too Human, and henceforth Bayreuth was silent as the tomb on the name of Nietzsche. The friends never met again, and when Parsifal was produced in 1882 at Bayreuth Nietzsche threw overboard his Wagnerian baggage and forswore the ideals of his former master. The master had long since thrown Nietzsche to the winds. When a disciple ceased to be useful he was dropped, as were Von Bülow, Von Hornstein, Ritter, and Liszt. In Meyerbeer Wagner encountered metal of his own kind; he could never catch this wily Berlin-born composer off his guard. Hence his eloquent abuse.

XIX

A VISIT TO WALT WHITMAN

My edition of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass is dated 1867, the third, if I am not mistaken, the first appearing in 1855. Inside is pasted a card upon which is written in large, clumsy letters: "Walt Whitman, Camden, New Jersey, July, 1877." I value this autograph because Walt gave it to me; rather I paid him for it, the proceeds, two dollars (I think that was the amount), going to some asylum in Camden. In addition, the "good gray poet" was kind enough to add a woodcut of himself as he appeared in the 1855 volume, "hankering, gross, mystical, nude," and another of his old mother, with her shrewd, kindly face. Walt is in his shirt-sleeves, a hand on his hip, the other in his pocket, his neck bare, the pose that of a nonchalant workman—though in actual practice he was always opposed to work of any sort; on his head is a slouch-hat, and you recall his line: "I wear my hat as I please, indoors or out." The picture is characteristic, even to the sensual mouth and Bowery-boy pose. You almost hear him say: "I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones." Altogether a different man from the later bard, the heroic apparition of Broadway, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Chestnut Street. I had convalesced from a severe attack of Edgar Allan Poe only to fall desperately ill with Whitmania. Youth is ever in revolt, age alone brings resignation. My favorite reading was Shelley, my composer among composers, Wagner. Chopin came later. This was in 1876, when the Bayreuth apotheosis made Wagner's name familiar to us, especially in Philadelphia, where his empty, sonorous Centennial March was first played by Theodore Thomas at the Exposition. The

reading of a magazine article by Moncure D. Conway caused me to buy a copy, at an extravagant price for my purse, of Leaves of Grass, and so uncritical was I that I wrote a parallel between Wagner and Whitman; between the most consciously artistic of men and the wildest among improvisators. But then it seemed to me that both had thrown off the "shackles of convention." (What prison-like similes we are given to in the heady, generous impulses of green adolescence.) I was a boy, and seeing Walt on Market Street, as he came from the Camden Ferry, I resolved to visit him. It was some time after the Fourth of July, 1877, and I soon found his little house on Mickle Street. A policeman at the ferry-house directed me. I confess I was scared after I had given the bell one of those pulls that we tremblingly essay at a dentist's door. To my amazement the old man soon stood before me, and cordially bade me enter.

"Walt," I said, for I had heard that he disliked a more ceremonious prefix, "I've come to tell you how much the Leaves have meant to me." "Ah!" he simply replied, and asked me to take a chair. To this hour I can see the humble room, but when I try to recall our conversation I fail. That it was on general literary subjects I know, but the main theme was myself. In five minutes Walt had pumped me dry. He did it in his quiet, sympathetic way, and, with the egoism of my age, I was not averse from relating to him the adventures of my soul. That Walt was a fluent talker one need but read his memoirs by Horace Traubel. Witness his tart allusion to Swinburne's criticism of himself: "Isn't he the damnedest simulacrum?" But he was a sphinx the first time I met him. I do recall that he said Poe wrote too much in a dark cellar, and that music was his chief recreation—of which art he knew nothing; it served him as a sounding background for his pencilled improvisations. I begged for an autograph. He told me of his interest in a

certain asylum or hospital, whose name has gone clean out of my mind, and I paid my few dollars for the treasured signature. It is now one of my literary treasures.

If I forget the tenor of our discourse I have not forgotten the immense impression made upon me by the man. As vain as a peacock, Walt looked like a Greek rhapsodist. Tall, imposing in bulk, his regular features, mild, light-blue or gray eyes, clear ruddy skin, plentiful white hair and beard, evoked an image of the magnificently fierce old men he chants in his book. But he wasn't fierce, his voice was a tenor of agreeable timbre, and he was gentle, even to womanliness. Indeed, he was like a receptive, lovable old woman, the kind he celebrates so often. He never smoked, his only drink was water. I doubt if he ever drank spirits. His old friends say "No," although he is a terrible rake in print. Without suggesting effeminacy, he gave me the impression of a feminine soul in a masculine envelope. When President Lincoln first saw him he said: "Well, he *looks* like a man!" Perhaps Lincoln knew, for his remark has other connotations than the speech of Napoleon when he met Goethe: "Voilà un homme!" Hasn't Whitman asked in Calamus, the most revealing section of Leaves: "Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic man?" He also wrote of Calamus: "Here the frailest leaves of me. . . . Here I shade down and hide my thoughts. I do not express them. And yet they expose me more than all my other poems." Mr. Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, when he dismissed Walt from his department because of Leaves, did not know about the Calamus section —I believe they were not incorporated till later—but Washington was acquainted with Walt and his idiosyncrasies, and, despite W. D. Connor's spirited vindication, certain rumors would not be stifled. Walt was thirty-six when Leaves appeared; forty-one when Calamus was written.

I left the old man after a hearty hand-shake, a So long!

just as in his book, and returned to Philadelphia. Full of the day, I told my policeman at the ferry that I had seen Walt. "That old gas-bag comes here every afternoon. He gets free rides across the Delaware," and I rejoiced to think that a soulless corporation had some appreciation of a great poet, though the irreverence of this "powerful uneducated person" shocked me. When I reached home I also told my mother of my visit. She was plainly disturbed. She said that the writings of the man were immoral, but she was pleased at my report of Walt's sanity, sweetness, mellow optimism, and his magnetism, like some natural force. I forgot, in my enthusiasm, that it was Walt who listened, I who gabbled. My father, who had never read Leaves, had sterner criticism to offer: "If I ever hear of you going to see that fellow you'll be sorry!" This, coming from the most amiable of parents, surprised me. Later I discovered the root of his objection, for, to be quite frank, Walt did not bear a good reputation in Philadelphia, and I have heard him spoken of so contemptuously that it would bring a blush to the shining brow of a Whitmaniac. Yet dogs followed him and children loved him. I saw Walt accidentally at intervals, though never again in Camden. I met him on the streets, and several times took him from the Carl Gaertner String Quartet Concerts in the foyer of the Broad Street Academy of Music to the Market Street cars. He lumbered majestically, his hairy breast exposed, but was a feeble old man, older than his years; paralysis had maimed him. He is said to have incurred it from his unselfish labors as nurse in the camp hospitals at Washington during the Civil War; however, it was in his family on the paternal side, and at thirty he was quite gray. The truth is, Walt was not the healthy hero he celebrates in his book. That he never dissipated we know; but his husky masculinity, his posing as the Great God Priapus in the garb of a Bowery boy, is discounted by the facts. Parsiphallic, he was, but

not of Pan's breed. In the Children of Adam, the part most unfavorably criticised of Leaves, he is the Great Bridegroom, and in no literature, ancient or modern, have been the "mysteries" of the temple of love so brutally exposed. With all his genius in naming certain unmentionable matters, I don't believe in the virility of these pieces, scintillating with sexual images. They leave one cold despite their erotic vehemence; the abuse of the vocative is not persuasive, their raptures are largely rhetorical. This exaltation, this ecstasy, seen at its best in William Blake, is sexual ecstasy, but only when the mood is married to the mot lumière is there authentic conflagration. Then his "barbaric yawp is heard across the roofs of the world"; but in the underhumming harmonics of Calamus, where Walt really loafs and invites his soul, we get the real man, not the inflated humbuggery of These States, Camerados, or My Message, which fills Leaves with their patriotic frounces. His philosophy is fudge. It was an artistic misfortune for Walt that he had a "mission," it is a worse one that his disciples endeavor to ape him. He was an unintellectual man who wrote conventionally when he was plain Walter Whitman, living in Brooklyn. But he imitated Ossian and Blake, and their singing robes ill-befitted his burly frame. If, in Poe, there is much "rant and rococo," Whitman is mostly yawping and yodling. He is destitute of humor, like the majority of "prophets" and uplifters, else he might have realized that a Democracy based on the "manly love of comrades" is an absurdity. Not alone in Calamus, but scattered throughout Leaves, there are passages that fully warrant unprejudiced psychiatrists in styling his book the bible of the third sex.

But there is rude red music in the versicles of Leaves. They stimulate, and, for some young hearts, they are as a call to battle. The book is a capital hunting-ground for quotations. Such massive head-lines—that soon sink into plati-

tudinous prose; such robust swinging rhythms, Emerson told Walt that he must have had a "long foreground." It is true. Notwithstanding his catalogues of foreign countries, he was hardly a cosmopolitan. Whitman's so-called "mysticism" is a muddled echo of New England Transcendentalism; itself a pale dilution of an outworn German idealism—what Coleridge called "the holy jungle of Transcendental metaphysics." His concrete imagination automatically rejected metaphysics. His chief asset is an extraordinary sensitiveness to the sense of touch; it is his distinguishing passion, and tactile images flood his work; this, and an eye that records appearances, the surface of things, and registers in phrases of splendor the picturesque, yet seldom fuses matter and manner into a poetical synthesis. The community of interest between his ideas and images is rather affiliated than cognate. He has a tremendous, though ill-assorted vocabulary. His prose is jolting, rambling, tumid, invertebrate. An "arrant artist," as Mr. Brownell calls him, he lacks formal sense and the diffuseness and vagueness of his supreme effort—the Lincoln burial hymn—serves as a nebulous buffer between sheer overpraise and serious criticism. He contrives atmosphere with facility, and can achieve magical pictures of the sea and the "mad naked summer night." His early poem, Walt Whitman, is for me his most spontanous offering. He has at times the primal gift of the poet—ecstasy; but to attain it he often wades through shallow, ill-smelling sewers, scales arid hills, traverses dull drab levels where the slag covers rich ore, or plunges into subterrene pools of nocturnal abominations—veritable regions of the "mother of dead dogs." Probably the sexlessness of Emerson's, Poe's, and Hawthorne's writings sent Whitman to an orgiastic extreme, and the morbid, nasty-nice puritanism that then tainted English and American letters received its first challenge to come out into the open and face natural facts. Despite his fearlessness,

one must subscribe to Edmund Clarence Stedman's epigram: "There are other lights in which a dear one may be regarded than as the future mother of men." Walt let in a lot of fresh air on the stuffy sex question of his day, but, in demanding equal sexual rights for women, he meant it in the reverse sense as propounded by our old grannies' purity leagues. Continence is not the sole virtue or charm in womanhood; nor, by the same token, is unchastity a brevet of feminine originality. But women, as a rule, have not rallied to his doctrines, instinctively feeling that he is indifferent to them, notwithstanding the heated homage he pays to their physical attractions. Good old Walt sang of his camerados, capons, Americanos, deck-hands, stage-coach-drivers, machinists, brakemen, firemen, sailors, butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers, and he associated with them; but they never read him or understood him. They prefer Longfellow. It is the cultured class he so despises that discovered, lauded him, believing that he makes vocal the underground world; above all, believing that he truly represents America and the dwellers thereof—which he decidedly does not. We are, if you will, a commonplace people, but normal, and not enamoured of "athletic love of comrades." I remember a dinner given by the Whitman Society about twenty years ago, at the St. Denis Hotel, which was both grotesque and pitiable. The guest of honor was "Pete" Doyle, the former car-conductor and "young rebel friend of Walt's," then a middle-aged person. John Swinton, who presided, described Whitman as a troglodyte, but a cave-dweller he never was; rather the avatar of the hobo. As John Jay Chapman wittily wrote: "He patiently lived on cold pie, and tramped the earth in triumph." Instead of essaying the varied, expressive, harmonious music of blank verse, he chose the easier, more clamorous, and disorderly way; but if he had not so chosen we should have missed the salty tang of the true Walt Whitman. Toward the last

there was too much Camden in his Cosmos. Quite appropriately his dying word was le mot de Cambronne. It was the last victory of an organ over an organism. And he was a gay old pagan who never called a sin a sin when it was a pleasure.

XX

THE BUFFOON OF THE NEW ETERNITIES: JULES LAFORGUE

I

"Jules Laforgue: Quelle joie!"
—J.-K.-Huysmans.

All victories are alike; defeat alone displays an individual profile. And the case of Jules Laforgue wears this special aspect. Dying on the threshold of his twenty-seventh year, coming too old into a world too young, his precocity as poet and master of fantastic prose has yet not the complexion of a Chatterton or a Keats. In his literary remains, slender enough as to quantity, there is little to suggest a fuller development if he had lived. Like his protagonist Arthur Rimbaud—surely the most extraordinary poetic apparition of the nineteenth century—Jules Laforgue accomplished his destiny during the period when most poets are moulding their wings preparatory to flight. He flew in youth, flew moonward, for his patron goddess was Selene, he her faithful worshipper, a true lunalogue. His transcendental indifferentism saved him from the rotten-ripe maturity of them that are born "with a ray of moonlight in their brains," as Villiers de l'Isle Adam hath it. And Villiers has also written: "When the forehead alone contains the existence of a man, that man is enlightened only from above his head; then his jealous shadow, prostrate under him, draws him by the feet, that it may drag him down into the invisible." Like Watteau, Laforgue was "condemned" from the beginning to "a green thought in a green shade." The spirit in him, the "shadow," devoured his soul,

pulverized his will, made of him a Hamlet without a propelling cause, a doubter in a world of cheap certitudes and insolent fatuities, but barred him proffering his pearls to pigs. He came before Nietzsche, yet could he have said with Zarathustra: "I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore." Now Laforgue was a great despiser.

But he made merry over the ivory, apes, and peacocks of existence. He seems less French than he is in his self-mockery, yet he is a true son of his time and of his country. This young Hamlet, who doubted the constancy of his mother the moon, was a very buffoon; I am the new buffoon of dusty eternities, might have been his declaration; a buffoon making subtle somersaults in the metaphysical blue. He was a metaphysician complicated by a poet. Von Hartmann it was who extorted his homage. "All is relative," was his war-cry on schools and codes and generalizations. His urbanity never deserted him, though it was an exasperated urbanity. His was an art of the nerves. Arthur Symons has spoken of his "icy ecstasy" and Maurice Maeterlinck described his laughter as "laughter of the soul." Like Chopin or Watteau, he danced on roses and thorns. All three were consumptives and the aura of decay floats about their work; all three suffered from the nostalgia of the impossible. The morbid decadent aquafortist that is revealed in the corroding etchings of Laforgue is germane to men in whom irony and pity are perpetually disputing. We think of Heine and his bitter-sweetness. Again with Zarathustra, Laforgue could say: "I do not give alms. I am not poor enough for that." He possesses the sixth sense of infinity. A cosmical jester, his badinage is well-nigh dolorous. His verse and prose form a series of personal variations. The lyric in him is through some temperamental twist reversed. Fantastic dreams overflow his reality, and he always dreams with wide-open eyes. Watteau's

l'Indifferent! A philosophical vaudevillist, he juggles with such themes as a metaphysical Armida, the moon and her minion, Pierrot; with celestial spasms and the odor of mortality, or the universal sigh, the autumnal refrains of Chopin, and the monotony of love. "Life is quotidian!" he has sung, and women are the very symbol of sameness, that is their tragedy—or comedy. "Stability thy name is Woman!" exclaims the Hamlet of this most spiritual among parodists.

One never gets him with his back to the wall. He vanishes in the shining cloud of a witty abstraction when cornered. His prose is full of winged neologisms, his poetry heavy with the metaphysics of ennui. Remy de Gourmont speaks of his magnificent work as the prelude to an oratorio achieved in silence. Laforgue, himself, called it an intermezzo, and in truth it is little more. His intellectual sensibility and his elemental soul make for mystifications. As if he knew the frailness of his tenure on life, he sought azure and elliptical routes. He would have welcomed Maeterlinck's test question: "Are you of those who name or those who only repeat names?" Laforgue was essentially a namer—with Gallic glee he would have enjoyed renaming the animals as they left the Noachian ark; yes, and nicknaming the humans, for he is a terrible disrespecter of persons and rank and of the seats of the mighty.

Some one has said that a criticism is negative if it searches for what a writer lacks instead of what he possesses. We should soon reach a zero if we only registered the absence of "necessary" traits in our poet. He is so unlike his contemporaries—with a solitary exception—that his curious genius seems composed of a bundle of negatives. But behind the mind of every great writer there marches a shadowy mob of phrases, which mimics his written words, and makes them untrue indices of his thoughts. These shadows are the unexpressed ideas of which the vis-

ible sentences are only eidolons; a cave filled with Platonic phantoms. The phrase of Laforgue has a timbre capable of infinite prolongations in the memory. It is not alone what he says, nor the manner, but his power of arousing overtones from his keyboard. His æsthetic mysticism is allied with a semi-brutal frankness. Feathers fallen from the wings of peri adorn the heads of equivocal persons. Cosmogonies jostle evil farceurs, and the silvery voices of children chant blasphemies. Laforgue could repeat with Arthur Rimbaud: "I accustomed myself to simple hallucinations: I saw, quite frankly, a mosque in place of a factory, a school of drums kept by the angels; post-chaises on the road to heaven, a drawing-room at the bottom of a lake; the title of a vaudeville raised up horrors before me. Then I explained my magical sophisms by the hallucination of words! I ended by finding something sacred in the disorder of my mind" [translation by Arthur Symons]. But while Laforgue with all his "spiritual dislocation" would not deny the "sacred" disorder, he saw life in too glacial a manner to admit that his were merely hallucinations. Rather, correspondences, he would say, for he was as much a disciple of Baudelaire and Gautier in his search for the hidden affinity of things as he was a lover of the antique splendors in Flaubert's Asiatic visions. He, too, dreamed of quintessentials, of the sheer power of golden vocables and the secret alchemy of art. He, too, promenaded his incertitudes, to use a self-revealing phrase of Chopin's. An aristocrat, he knew that in the country of the idiot the imbecile always will be king, and, "like many a one who turned away from life, he only turned away from the rabble, and cared not to share with them well and fire and fruit." His Kingdom of Green was consumed and became gray by the regard of his coldly measuring eye. For him modern man is an animal who bores himself. Laforgue is an essayist who is also a causeur. His abundance is never exuberance.

Without sentiment or romance, nevertheless, he does not suggest ossification of the spirit. To dart a lance at mythomania is his delight, while preserving the impassibility of a Parnassian. His travesties of Hamlet, Lohengrin, Salomé, Pan, Perseus enchant, their plastic yet metallic prose denotes the unique artist; above all they are modern, they graze the hem of the contemporaneous. From the sublime to the arabesque is but a semitone in his antic mind. Undulating in his desire to escape the automatic, doubting even his own scepticism, Jules Laforgue is a Hamlet à rebours. Old Fletcher sings:

> "Then stretch our bones in a still, gloomy valley,
> Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."

II

He seems to have been of an umbrageous character. His life was sad and simple. He was born August 20, 1860, at Montevideo—"Ville en amphithéâtre, toits en terrasses, rues en daumiers, rade enorme"—of Breton parentage. He died at Paris, 1887. Gustave Kahn, the symbolist poet, describes Laforgue in his Symbolistes and Décadents as a serious young man, with sober English manners and an extreme rectitude in the matter of clothes. Not the metaphysical Narcissus that was once Maurice Barrès—whose early books show the influence of Laforgue. He adored the philosophy of the Unconscious as set forth by Von Hartmann, was erudite, collected delicate art, thought much, read widely, and was an ardent advocate of the Impressionistic painters. I have a pamphlet by Médéric Dufour, entitled Etude sur l'Æthétique de Jules Laforgue: une Philosophie de l'Impressionisme, which is interesting, though far from conclusive, being an attack on the determinism of Taine, and a defense of Monet, Pissarro, and Sisley. But then we only formulate our preferences into laws. The

best thing in it is the phrase: "There are no types, there is only humanity," to the wisdom of which we must heartily subscribe. From 1880 to 1886 Laforgue was reader to the Empress Augusta at Berlin and was admired by the cultivated court circle, as his letters to his sister and M. Ephrussi, his friend, testify. He was much at home in Germany and there is no denying the influence of Teutonic thought and spirit on his susceptible nature. Naturally prone to pessimism (he has called himself a "mystic pessimist") as was Amiel, the study of Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann solidified the sentiment. He met an English girl, Leah Lee, by name, and after giving her lessons in French, fell in love, and in 1887 married her. It is interesting to observe the sinister dandy in private life, as a tender lover, a loving brother. This spiritual dichotomy is not absent in his poetry. He holds back nothing in his self-revelations, except the sad side, though there is always an exquisite tremulous sensibility in his baffling art. A few months after his marriage he was attacked by the fatal malady, as was his unfortunate wife, and he was buried on his twenty-seventh birthday. Gustave Kahn notes that few followed him to the grave. He was unknown except to some choice spirits, the dozen superior persons of Huysmans, scattered throughout the universe. His wife survived him only a short time. Little has been written of him, the most complete estimate being that of Camille Mauclair, with an introduction by Maeterlinck—who calls his Hamlet more Hamlet than Shakespeare's. In addition to these, and Dufour, Kahn, De Gourmont and Felix Féneon, we have in English essays by George Moore, Arthur Symons, Philip Hale, the critic of music, and Aline Gorren. Mr. Moore introduced Laforgue in company with Rimbaud to the English reading world and Mr. Symons devoted to him one of his sensitive studies in The Symbolist Movement in Literature. Mr. Hale did the same years ago for American

readers in a sympathetic article, The Fantastical Jules Laforgue. He also translated with astonishing fidelity to the letter and spirit of the author, his incomparable Lohengrin, Fils de Parsifal. I regret having it no longer in my possession so that I might quote from its delicious prose. As to the verse, I know of few attempts to translate the untranslatable. Perhaps Mr. Symons has tried his accomplished hand at the task. How render the sumptuous assonance and solemn rhythms of Marche Funèbre: O convoi solennel des soleils magnifiques?

III

"Je ne suis qu'un viveur lunaire
Qui faits des ronds dans les bassins
Et cela, sans autre dessin
Que devenir un légendaire. . . ."

Sings our poet in the silver-fire verse of L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune, wherein he asks—Mais où sont les Lunes d'Antan? This Pierrot lunaire, this buffoon of new and dusty eternities, wrote a sort of vers libres, which, often breaking off with a smothered sob, modulates into prose and sings the sorrows and complaints of a world peopled by fantastic souls, clowns, somnambulists, satyrs, poets, harlots, dainty girls, Chéret posters, pierrots, kings of psychopathic tastes, blithe birds, and sad-colored cemeteries. The poet is a mocking demon who rides on clouds dropping epigrams earthward, the earth that grunts and sweats beneath the sun or cowers and weeps under the stellar prairies. He mockingly calls himself "The Grand Chancellor of Analysis." Like Nietzsche he dances when his heart is heavy, and trills his roundelays and his gamut of rancorous flowers with an enigmatic smile on his lips. It is a strange and disquieting music, a pageantry of essences, this verse with its resonance of emerald. Appearing in fugi-

tive fashion, it was gathered into a single volume through the efforts of friends and with the Moralités légendaires comprises his life-work, for we can hardly include the Mélanges posthumes, which consist of scraps and fragments (published in 1903) together with some letters, not a very weighty addition to the dead poet's fame. His translations of Walt Whitman I've not seen. Perhaps his verse is doomed; it was born with the hectic flush of early dissolution, but it is safe to predict that as long as lovers of rare literature exist the volume of prose will survive. It has for the gourmet of style an unending charm, the charm en sourdine of its creator, to whom a falling leaf or an empire in dissolution was of equal value. "His work," wrote Mr. Symons, "has the fatal evasiveness of those who shrink from remembering the one thing which they are unable to forget. Coming as he does after Rimbaud, turning the divination of the other into theories, into achieved results, he is the eternally grown-up nature to the point of self-negation, as the other is the eternal enfant terrible." Tout était pour le vieux dans le meilleur des mondes, Laforgue would have cried in the epigram of Paul Bourget.

The prose of Jules Laforgue recalls to me his description of the orchestra in Salomé, the fourth of the Moralités légendaires. Sur un mode allègre et fataliste, un orchestre aux instruments d'ivoire improvisait une petite overture unanime. That his syllables are of ivory I feel, and improvised, but his themes are pluralistic, the immedicable and colossal ennui of life the chiefest. Woman—the "Eternal Madame," as Baudelaire calls her—is a being both magical and mediocre; she is also an escape from the universal world-pain. La fin de l'homme est proche . . . Antigone va passer du ménage de la famille au ménage de la planète (prophetic words). But when lovely woman begins to talk of the propagation of the ideal she only means the human species. With Lessing he believes: "There is, at

most, but one disagreeable woman in the world; a pity then that every man gets her for himself."

It is rather singular to observe in the writings of Marinetti, the self-elected leader of the so-called Futurists, the hopeless deliquescence of the form invented by Louis Bertrand in his Gaspard de la Nuit, and developed with almost miraculous results in Baudelaire and terminating with Huysmans, Maeterlinck, and Francis Poictevin ("Paysages"). Rimbaud had intervened. In his Illuminations we read that "so soon as the Idea of the Deluge had sunk back into its place, a rabbit halted amid the sain-foin and the small swinging bells, and said its prayers to the rainbow through the spider's web. Oh! The precious stones in hiding, the flowers already looking out . . . Madame X established a piano in the Alps. . . . The caravans started. And the Splendid Hotel was erected upon the chaos of ice and night of the Pole" (from the translation by Aline Gorren). This, apparently mad sequence of words and dissociation of ideas has been deciphered by M. Kahn, and need not daunt any one who has patience and ingenuity. I confess I prefer Laforgue, who at his most cryptic is never so wildly tantalizing as Rimbaud.

Moralités légendaires contains six sections. I don't know which to admire the most, the Hamlet or the Lohengrin, the Salomé or the Persée et Andromède. Le Miracle des Roses is of an exceeding charm, though dealing with the obvious, while Pan et la Syrinx has a quality which I can recall nowhere else in literature; perhaps in the cadences charged with the magic and irony of Chopin, or in the half-dreams of Watteau, color and golden sadness intermingled, may evoke the spiritual parodies of Laforgue, but in literature there is no analogue, though Pan is of classic flavor despite his very modern Weltanschauung. Syrinx is a woodland creature nebulous and exquisite. Pursued by Pan—the Eternal Male in rut—she does not succumb to his pipes,

and after she has vanished in the lingering wind, he blows sweeter music through his seven reeds. The symbol is not difficult to decipher. And who would not succumb to the languorous melancholy of Andromède, not chained to a rock but living on the best of terms with her monster, who calls her Bébé! The sea bores her profoundly. She looks for Perseus, who doesn't come; the sea, always the sea without a moment's weakness; in brief, not the stuff of which friends are made! When the knight appears and kills her monster, he loses his halo for Andromède, who cherishes her monstrous guardian. Perseus, a prig disgusted by the fickleness of the Young Person, flees, and the death of the monster brings to life a lovely youth—put under the spell of malignant powers—who promptly weds his ward. In Lohengrin, Son of Parsifal, the whole machinery of the Wagner opera is transposed to the key of lunar parody. What ambrosia from the Walhalla of topsyturvy is this Elsa with her "eyes hymeneally illumined" as she awaits her savior. He appears and they are married. Alas! The pillow of the nuptial couch becomes a swan that carries off Lohengrin weary of the tart queries made by his little bride concerning love and sex and other unimportant questions of daily life. This Elsa is a sensual goose. She is also a stubborn believer in the biblical injunction: "Crescite et multiplicamini," and she would willingly allow the glittering stranger Knight to brisé le sceau de ses petites solitudes, as the Vicar of Diane-Artemis phrases it. The landscapes of these tales are fantastically beautiful, and scattered through the narrative are fragments of verse, vagrant and witty, that light up the stories with a glowworm phosphorescence.

Salomé and her celebrated eyebrows is a spiritual sister of Flaubert's damsel, as Elsa is nearly related to his Salammbô. She dwells in the far-off Iles Blanches Ésotériques, and she, too, is annoyed by the stupidity of the sea, always new, always respectable! She is the first of the Sa-

lomés since Flaubert who has caught some of her prototype's fragrance. (Oscar Wilde's attempt proved mediocre. He introduced a discordant pathological note, but the music of Richard Strauss may save his pasticcio. It interprets the exotic prose of the Irishman with tongues of fire; it laps up the text, encircles it, underlines, amplifies, comments, and, in nodules of luminosity, makes clear that which is dark, ennobles much that is vain, withal it never insists on leading; the composer appears to follow the poet.) Laforgue's Salomé tries to sport with the head of John the Baptist, stumbles, loses her footing, and falls from the machicolated wall on jagged rocks below, as the head floats out to sea, miraculously alight. There are wit and philosophy and the hint of high thoughts in Salomé, though her heart like glass is cold, empty, and crystalline.

The subtitle of Hamlet, which heads the volume, is—Or, the Results of Filial Devotion—and the story, as Mr. Hale asserts, is Laforgue's masterpiece. Here is a Hamlet for you, a prince whose antics are enough to disturb the dust of Shakespeare and make the angels on high weep with hysterical laughter. Not remotely hinting at burlesque, the character is delicately etched. By the subtle withdrawal of certain traits, this Hamlet behaves as a man would who has been trepanned and his moral nature removed by an analytical surgeon. He is irony personified and is the most delightful company for one weary of the Great Good Game around and about us, the game of deceit, treachery, politics, love, social intercourse, religion, and commerce. Laforgue's Hamlet sees through the hole in the mundane millstone and his every phrase is like the flash of a scimitar.

It is the irony of his position, the irony of his knowledge that he is Shakespeare's creation and must live up to his artistic paternity; the irony that he is au fond a cabotin, a footlight strutter, a mouther of phrases metaphysical and a despiser of Ophelia (chère petite glu he names her) that

are all so appealing. Intellectual braggart, this Hamlet resides after his father Horwendill's "irregular decease" in a tower hard by the Sound, from which Helsingborg may be seen. An old, stagnant canal is beneath his windows. In his chamber are waxen figures of his mother, Gerutha, and his uncle-father, Fengo. He daily pierces their hearts with needles after a bad old-fashioned mediæval formula of witchcraft. But it avails naught. With a fine touch he seeks for his revenge by having enacted before their Majesties of Denmark his own play. They incontinently collapse in mortal nausea, for they are excellent critics.

Such a play scene, withal Shakespearean! "Stability thy name is woman!" he exclaims bitterly, for he fears love with the compromising domesticity of marriage. It is his rigorous transvaluation of all moral values and conventionalities that proclaims this Hamlet a man of the future. No half-way treaties with the obvious in life, no crooking the pregnant hinges of his opinions to the powers that be. An anarch, pure and complex, he despises all methods. What soliloquies, replete with the biting, cynical wisdom of a disillusionized soul!

"Ah," he sighs, "there are no longer young girls, they are all nurses. Ophelia loves me because, as Hobbes claims: 'Nothing is more agreeable in our ownership of goods than the thought that they are superior to the goods of others.' Now I am socially and morally superior to the 'goods' of her little friends. She wishes to make me, Hamlet, comfortable. Ah, if I could only have met Helen of Narbonne!" A Hamlet who quotes the author of The Leviathan is a Hamlet with a vengeance.

To him enter the players William and Kate. He reads them his play. Kate's stage name is Ophelia. "Comment!" cries Hamlet, "encore une Ophelia dans ma potion!" William doesn't like the play because his part is not "sympathetic." After they retire Hamlet indulges in a passionate

outburst reproaching the times with its hypocrisy and des hypocrites et routinières jeunes filles. If women but knew they would prostrate themselves before him as did the weeping ones upon the body of the dead Adonis! The key of this discourse is high-pitched and cutting. Laforgue, a philosopher, a pessimist, makes his art the canvas for his ironic temperament. The Prince's interview with Ophelia is full of soundless mirth. And how he lavishes upon his own deranged head offensive abuse: "Piteous provincial! Cabotin! Pédicure!" This last is his topmost term of contempt.

His parleying with the grave-diggers is another stroke of wit. One of them tells him that Polonius is carried off by apoplexy—a bust has been erected to his memory bearing the inscription, "Words! Words! Words!" He also learns that Yorick was his half-brother, the son of a gypsy woman. Ophelia dies—he hears this with mixed feelings—and he is informed that the young Prince Hamlet is quite mad. The grave-digger is a philosopher, he thinks that Fortinbras is at hand, that the best investment for his money will be in Norwegian bonds. The funeral cortège approaches. Hamlet hides.

His soliloquy upon the skull of Yorick has been partly done into English by Mr. Symons.

"Alas, poor Yorick! As one seems to hear in this little shell the multitudinous roar of the ocean, so I hear the whole quenchless symphony of the universal soul, of whose echoes this box was its cross-roads. There's a solid idea! . . . Perhaps I have twenty or thirty years to live, and I shall pass away like the others. Like the others? O Totality, the misery of being there no longer! Ah! I would like to set out to-morrow and search all through the world for the most adamantine processes of embalming. They, too, were the little people of History, learning to read, trimming their nails, lighting the dirty lamp every evening, in love,

gluttonous, vain, fond of compliments, hand-shakes, and kisses, living on bell-town gossip, saying, 'What sort of weather shall we have to-morrow? Winter has really come. . . . We have had no plums this year.' Ah! Everything is good, if it would not come to an end. And thou, Silence, pardon the earth; the little madcap hardly knows what she is doing; on the day of the great summing-up before the Ideal, she will be labelled with a piteous *idem* in the column of the miniature evolutions of the Unique Evolution, in the column of negligible quantities. . . . To die! Evidently, one does without knowing it, as, every night, one enters upon sleep. One has no consciousness of the passing of the last lucid thought into sleep, into swooning, into death. Evidently. But to be no more, to be here no more, to be ours no more! Not even to be able, any more, to press against one's human heart, some idle afternoon, the ancient sadness contained in one little chord on the piano!"

And this "secular sadness" pursues the heartless Hamlet to the cemetery; he returns after dark in company with the buxom actress Kate. They have eloped.

But the fatal irresolution again overtakes him. He would see Ophelia's tomb for the last time, and as he attempts to decipher its inscription, Laertes—idiot d'humanité, the average sensible man—approaches and the pair hold converse. It is a revelation of the face of foolishness. Laertes reproaches Hamlet. He has by his trifling with Ophelia caused her death. Laertes calls him a poor demented one, exclaims over his lack of moral sense, and winds up by bidding the crazy Prince leave the cemetery. Quand on finit par folie, c'est qu'on a commencé par le cabotinage. (Which is a consoling axiom for an actor.) Hamlet with his naïve irony calmly inquires:

"And thy sister!" This is too much for the distracted brother, who poignards the Prince. Hamlet expires with Nero's cry on his lips:

"Ah! Ah! *Qualis . . . artifex . . . pereo!*" And, as the author remarks: "He rendered to immutable nature his Hamletic soul." William enters and, discovering his Kate, gives her a sound beating; not the first or the last, as she apprises us. The poem ends with this motto: Un Hamlet de moins; la race n'en est pas perdue, qu'on se le dise! Which is chilly truth.

The artistic beauty of the prose, its haunting assonance, its supple rhythms, make this Hamlet impossible save in French. Nor can the fine edge of its wit, its multiple though masked ironies, its astounding transposition of Shakespearean humor and philosophy be aught else than loosely paraphrased. Laforgue's Hamlet is of to-morrow, for every epoch orchestrates anew its own vision of Hamlet. The eighteenth century had one; the nineteenth had another; and our generation a fresher. But we know of none so vital as this fantastic thinker of Laforgue's. He must have had his ear close to the Time Spirit, so aptly has he caught the vibrations of his whirring loom, so closely to these vibrations has he attuned the key-note of his twentieth-century Hamlet.

XXI

A STUDY OF DE MAUPASSANT

In 1881 Turgenieff gave Tolstoy a book by a young Frenchman, telling him that he would find it amusing. This book was La Maison Tellier. Tolstoy revolted at the theme, but could not deny the freshness and power of the author. He found Maupassant "deficient in the moral sense"; yet he was interested and followed the progress of Flaubert's pupil. When Une Vie appeared, the Russian novelist pronounced it incomparably the best work of its author—perhaps the best French novel since Hugo's Les Misérables. He wrote this in an article entitled Guy de Maupassant and the Art of Fiction. It was doubtless the Norman's clear, robust vision that appealed to Tolstoy, who, at that period, was undergoing a change of heart; else how could he call Les Misérables the greatest novel of France, he the writer of Anna Karenina—the antipodes of that windy apotheosis of vapid humanitarianism, the characteristic trait of Hugo's epic of pity and unreality.

But Maupassant affected Tolstoy as he had affected Turgenieff. Guy has told us of his first meeting with the latter, an artist superior to Tolstoy. "The first time I saw Turgenieff was at Gustave Flaubert's—a door opened; a giant came in, a giant with a silver head, as they would say in a fairy tale." This must have been in 1876, for in a letter dated January 24, 1877, Turgenieff writes: "Poor Maupassant is losing all his hair. He came to see me. He is as nice as ever, but very ugly just at present." In 1880 the young man published a volume of poetry, Des Vers. He was thirty years old (born August 5, 1850).

The literary apprenticeship of Guy to Gustave Flaubert

is a thrice-told tale, and signifies only this: If the pupil had not been richly endowed all the lessons of Flaubert would have availed him little. Perhaps the anecdote has been overdone; Maupassant has related it in the preface to Pierre et Jean, and in the introduction to the George Sand-Flaubert correspondence—now at the head of the edition of Bouvard et Pécuchet. There are letters of Flaubert to his disciple full of his explosive good nature, big heart, irascibility and generous outpouring on the subject of his art. The thing that surprises a close student of this episode and its outcome is that Maupassant was in reality so unlike his master. And when I further insist that the younger man appropriated whole scenes from Flaubert for his longer stories, especially from L'Education Sentimentale, I feel that I am uttering a paradox.

What I mean is this: Maupassant's temperament was utterly different from Flaubert's. They were both prosecuted for certain things they wrote, Guy for a poem in 1880, at Estampes; there had been a détraqué nervous system in both cases. Yet, similar in ideals and physical peculiarities as were these two men, there was a profound psychical gulf between their temperaments. Flaubert was a great genius, a path breaker, a philosophic poet, and the author of La Tentation de St. Antoine, the nearest approach that France can show to a prose epic, and a book of beauty and originality. Maupassant was a great talent, and a growing one when disease cut him down. He imitated the externals of Flaubert, his irony, his vivid power of picture-making; even his pessimism he developed—though that was personal, as we shall soon see. And yet his work is utterly unlike Flaubert, probably unlike what Flaubert had hoped for—the old man died in 1881 and therefore did not live to enjoy Maupassant in full bloom. If it did not sound quite heretical I should be tempted to assert that the writer Maupassant most patterned after, was Prosper Mérimée, an artist de-

tested by Flaubert because of his hard style. It is this precise style that Maupassant exhibits but coupled with a clarity, an ease, and a grace that Mérimée could not boast. Of Flaubert's harmonious and imaginatively colored manner, Maupassant shows no trace in his six novels and his two hundred and odd tales.

Maupassant was not altogether faithful to Flaubert's injunctions regarding the publication of his early attempts. He made many secret flights under different pen-names, though Boule de Suif was the first prose signed by him. It appeared in Les Soirées de Medan, and its originality quite outshone the more solid qualities of Zola's L'Attaque au Moulin, and a realistic tale of Huysmans's, Sac au dos. It was this knapsack of story, nevertheless, that opened the eyes of both Zola and Goncourt to the genuine realism of Huysmans as opposed to the more human but also more sentimental surface realism of Maupassant. Huysmans proved himself devoid of the story-telling gift, of dramatic power; yet he has, if compared to Maupassant, without an iota of doubt, the more vivid vision of the two; "the intensest vision of the modern world," says Havelock Ellis. Pictorial, not imaginative vision, be it understood. In his mystic latter-day rhapsodies it is the realist who sees, the realist who makes those poignant, image-breeding phrases. Take up Maupassant and in his best tales and novels, such as La Maison Tellier, Boule de Suif, Une Vie, Fort Comme la Mort, to mention a few, you will be surprised at the fluidity, the artful devices to elude the harshness of reality, the pessimistic poetry that suffuses his pages after reading Huysmans's immitigable exposition of the ugly and his unflinching attitude before the unpleasant. And Huysmans's point of departure is seldom from an idea; facts furnish him with an adequate spring-board. Maupassant is more lyric in tone and texture. Edmond de Goncourt, jealous of the success of the newcomer, wrote in his diary that Maupas-

sant was an admirable conteur, but a great writer, never. Zola admitted to a few intimates that Guy was not the realist that Huysmans was. All of which is interesting, but proves nothing except that Maupassant wrote a marvellous collection of short stories, real, hyphenated short-stories, as Mr. Brander Matthews makes the delicate distinction, while Huysmans did not.

Edouard Maynial's La Vie et l'Œuvre de Guy de Maupassant is the most recent of the biographical studies devoted to our subject, though Baron Albert Lumbroso, who escapes by a single letter from being confounded with the theory-ridden Turin psychiatrist, has given us, with the approval of Guy's mother, the definitive study of Maupassant's malady and death. It is frequently quoted by Maynial; there is a careful study of it which appeared in *Mercure de France,* June, 1905, by Louis Thomas. And there is that charming volume, Amitié amoureuse, in which Guy is said to figure as the Philippe, by Henri Amic and Madame Lecomte du Nouy. Here we get another Maupassant, not the taureau triste of Taine, but a delightful, sweet-tempered, unselfish, and altogether lovable fellow. What was the cause of his downfall? Dissipation? Mental overwork —which is the same thing? Disease? Maynial, Lumbroso, and Thomas offer us such a variety of documents that there can be no doubt as to the determining element. From 1880 to his death in 1893 Guy de Maupassant was "a candidate for general paralysis." These are the words of his doctor, later approved by Doctor Blanche, to whose sanitarium in Paris he was taken, January 7, 1893.

The father of Guy was Gustave de Maupassant, of an ancient Lorraine family. This family was noble. His mother was of Norman extraction, Laure de Poittevin, the sister of Alfred de Poittevin, Flaubert's dearest friend, a poet who died young. There is no truth in the gossip that Guy was the son of Flaubert. Flaubert loved both the

Poittevins; hence his lively interest in Guy. There was a younger brother, Hervé de Maupassant, who died of a mental disorder. His daughter, Simone, is the legatee of her uncle. The marriage of the elder Maupassants proved a failure. They are both dead now, and the subject may be discussed to the point of admitting that the father was not a domestic man; Guy inherited his taste for Bohemian life, and Madame Laure de Maupassant, after separating from her husband, was subject to nervous crises in which she attempted her life by swallowing laudanum and by strangling herself with her own hair. She was rescued both times, but she was an invalid to the last. A loving mother, she overlooked the education of Guy, and let it be said that no happier child ever lived. His early days were passed at Etretat, at the Villa Verguies, and generally in the open air.

The future writer adored the sea; he has written many tales of the water, of yachts and river sports. He went to the seminary at Yvetot and the lyceum of Rouen, but his education was desultory, his reading principally of his own selection—like most men of individual character. He was a farceur, fond of mystifications, of rough practical jokes, of horseplay. His physique was more Flemish than French —a deep chest, broad shoulders, heavy muscular arms and legs, a small head, a bull-neck. He looked like the mate of a deep-sea ship rather than a literary man. Add to this a craze for rowing, canoeing, swimming, boxing, fencing, and running. An all-round athlete, as the phrase goes, Guy, it is related, once paid a hulking chap to let himself be kicked. So hard was Guy's kick, done in an experimental humor, that the victim became enraged and knocked the kicker off his pins. Flaubert, the apostle of the immobile, objected. Too many flirtations, too much exercise! he admonishingly cried. A writer must cultivate repose.

In sooth Maupassant went a terrific pace. He abused his constitution from the beginning, seemingly tormented by

seven restless devils. He spent five hours a day at his office in the Ministry, in the afternoon he rowed on the Seine, in the evening he wrote. After he had resigned as a bureaucrat he worked from seven until twelve every morning, no matter the excesses of the previous night; the afternoon he spent on the river, retiring very late. "Toujours les femmes, petit cochon," wrote Flaubert in 1876, "il faut travailler." But it was precisely work that helped to kill the man. Those six pages a day, while they seldom showed erasures, were carefully written, and not until after much thought. Guy was the type of the apparently spontaneous writers. His manuscripts are free from the interlineations of Flaubert. He wrote at one jet; but there was elaborate mental preparation. Toward the last began the ether inhalations, the chloroform, hasheesh, the absinthe, cocaine, and the "odor symphonies"—Huysmans's des Esseintes, and his symphonic perfume sprays were not altogether the result of invention. On his yacht *Bel Ami* Guy never ceased his daily travail. It was Taine who called him un taureau triste. Paul Bourget relates that when he told Maupassant of this epigram, he calmly replied: "Better a bull than an ox."

His output—as they say in publishing circles—was breath-catching. It is whispered that he worked all the better after a "hard night." Now there can be but one end to such an expenditure of nervous energy, and that end came, not suddenly, but with the treacherous, creeping approach of paralysis. "Literary" criticism of the Nordau type is usually a foolish thing; yet in Maupassant's case one does not need to be a skilled psychiatrist to follow and note the gradual palsy of the writer's higher centres. Such stories as Qui Sait? Lui, Le Horla—a terrifying conception that beats Poe on his own chosen field—Fou, Un Fou, and several others show the nature of his malady. Guy de Maupassant came fairly by his cracked nervous constitution, and instead of dissipation, mental and physical, being the de-

termining causes of his shattered health, they were really the outcome of an inherited predisposition to all that is self-destructive. The French alienists called it une hérédité chargée. (No doubt the dread Spirochæta pallida.)

He never relaxed his diligence, even writing criticism. He saluted the literary débuts of Paul Hervieu and Edouard Rod in an article which appeared in *Gil Blas*. At the time of his death he was contemplating an extensive study of Turgenieff. Edmond de Goncourt did not like him, suspecting him of irreverence because of some words Guy had written in the preface to Pierre et Jean about complicated exotic vocabularies; meaning the Goncourts, of course. It is to be believed that Flaubert also had some quiet fun with the brothers and with Zola regarding their mania for note taking; read Bouvard et Pécuchet for confirmation of this idea of mine.

Maupassant was paid one franc a line for his novels in the periodicals, and 500 francs for the newspaper rights of publication only; good prices twenty-five years ago in Paris.

His annual income was about 28,000 to 35,000 francs, and it kept up for at least ten years. A table shows us that to December, 1891, the sale of his books was as follows: short stories, 169,000; novels, 180,000; travel, 24,000; in all 373,000 volumes. Maupassant was even for these days of swollen figures a big "seller." His mother had an income of 5,000 francs, but she far excelled the amount in her living expenses. Guy was an admirable son—tender, thoughtful, and generous. He made her an allowance, and at his death left her in comfort, if not actually wealthy. She died at Nice, December 8, 1904, his father surviving him until 1899.

And that death was achieved by the most hideous route—insanity. Restless, travelling incessantly, fearful of darkness, of his own shadow, he was like an Oriental magician who had summoned malignant spirits from outer

space only to be destroyed by them. Not in Corsica or Sicily, in Africa nor the south of France, did Guy fight off his rapidly growing disease. He worked hard, he drank hard, but to no avail; the blackness of his brain increased. Melancholia and irritability supervened; he spelled words wrong, he quarrelled with his friends, he instituted a law-suit against a New York newspaper, *The Star;* then the persecution craze, folie des grandeurs, frenzy. The case was "classic" from the beginning, even to the dilated pupils of his eyes, as far back as 1880. The 1st of January, 1892, he had promised to spend with his mother at Villa de Ravenelles, at Nice. But he went, instead, against his mother's wishes, to Ste.-Marguerite in company with two sisters, society women, one of them said to have been the heroine of Notre Cœur.

The next day he arrived, his features discomposed, and in a state of great mental excitement. He was tearful and soon left for Cannes with his valet, François. What passed during the night was never exactly known, except that Guy attempted suicide by shooting, and with a paper-knife. The knife inflicted a slight wound; the pistol contained blank cartridges—François had suspected his master's mood, and told the world later of it in his simple loving memoirs—and his forehead was slightly burned. Some months previous he had told Doctor Frémy that between madness and death he would not hesitate; a lucid moment had shown him his fate, and he sought death. After a week, during which two stout sailors of his yacht, *Bel Ami,* guarded him, as he sadly walked on the beach regarding with tear-stained cheeks his favorite boat, he was taken to Passy, to Doctor Blanche's institution. One of his examining physicians there was Doctor Franklin Grout, who later married Flaubert's niece, Caroline Commanville.

July 6, 1893, Maupassant died, as a lamp is extinguished for lack of oil. But the year he spent at the asylum was

wretched; he became a mere machine, and perhaps the only pleasure he experienced was the hallucination of bands of black butterflies that seemed to sweep across his room. Monsieur Maynial does not tell of the black butterflies, the truth of which I can vouch for, as I heard the story from Lassalle, the French barytone, a friend of Maupassant's.

It may be interesting to the curious to learn that the good-hearted, brave heroine of Boule de Suif was a certain Adrienne Legay of Rouen, and that she heartily reprobated the writer for giving her story to the world. She even went so far as to say that Guy did it in a spirit of revenge. Madame Laure de Maupassant made inquiries about the patriotic little sinner so as to help her. It was too late. She had died in extreme poverty. The heroine of Mademoiselle Fifi was a brunette, Rachel by name; the hero was a young German officer, Baron William d'Eyrick.

Would Maupassant have reached the sunlit heights, as Tolstoy believed? Who may say? Truth lies not at the bottom of a well, but in suffering; suffering alone reveals the truth of himself, of his soul to man, and Guy had suffered as few; he had passed into the Inferno that later Nietzsche entered, passed into though not through it. Turgenieff, for whom Guy entertained a profound regard, had influenced him more than he, with his doglike fidelity for Flaubert, would have cared to acknowledge. Paul Bourget gives us chapter and verse for this statement; furthermore, the same authority has described—in his Etudes et Portraits—the enormous travail of Maupassant in pursuit of style—he, seemingly, the most spontaneous writer of his generation. His books offend, delight, startle, and edify thousands of readers. That they have done absolute harm we are not prepared to say; book wickedness is, after all, an academic, not a vital question. If all the wicked books that have seen the light of publication had wrought the evil predicted of them the earth would be an abomination. In reality, we

discuss with varying shades of enthusiasm or detestation such frank literature—naturally when it is literature—and after the hullabaloo of the moral bell-boys has ceased, the book is quietly forgotten on its shelf. Flaubert once wrote of the vast fund of indifference possessed by society. Dramas, books, pictures, statues have never ruined our overmoral world. The day for such things—if there ever was such a day—has passed. Besides, among the people of most nations, the hatred of art and literature is pushed to the point of lecturing boastfully about that same hatred.

XXII

A MUSICAL PRIMITIVE: MODESTE MOUSSORGSKY

One need not be a Slavophile to admire Russian patriotism. The love of the Russian for his country is a passion. And from lips parched by the desire of liberty—though persecuted, exiled, imprisoned—this passion is still voiced with unabated intensity. What eloquent apostrophes have been addressed Russia by her great writers! How Turgenieff praised her noble tongue! The youngest among the European nations, herself a nation with genius, must possess a mighty power thus to arouse the souls of her children. Russia right or wrong! seems to be the slogan, even of those whom injustice and cruelty have driven to desperation. It is the land of neuroses, and the form that patriotism assumes there may be one other specimen. Yet the Russian is a cosmopolitan man; he is more French than the Parisian, and a willing dweller in the depths of German thought. The most artistic of Russia's novelists, Turgenieff, was cosmopolitan; and it was a frequent reproach made during his lifetime that the music of Tschaikovsky was too European, not sufficiently national. Naturally, Anton Rubinstein suffered the same criticism; too German for the Russians, too Russian for the Germans. It was altogether different in the case of Modeste Moussorgsky.

To enter into sympathy with Russian music we must remember one thing: that the national spirit pervades its masterpieces. Even the so-called "cosmopolitanism" of Peter Ilitch Tschaikovsky is superficial. To be sure, he leaned on Liszt and the French, but booming melancholy and orgiastic frenzy may be found in some of his symphonies. According

to the judgment of the Rubinsteins he was too much the Kalmuck; Nicolas Rubinstein severely criticised him for this trait. But of all the little group that gathered about Mila Balakirev fifty years ago there was no one so Russian as a certain young officer named Modeste Petrovitch Moussorgsky (born 1839, died 1881). Not Rimsky-Korsakof, Borodine, Cesar Cui were so deeply saturated with love of the Russian soil and folk-lore as this pleasant young man. He played the piano skilfully, but as amateur, not virtuoso. He came of good family, "little nobles," and received an excellent but conventional education. A bit of a dandy, he was the last person from whom to expect a revolution, but in Russia anything may happen. Moussorgsky was like other well-nurtured youths who went to Siberia for a mere gesture of dissent. With Emerson he might have agreed that "whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist." With him rebellion against law and order revealed itself in an abhorrence of text-books, harmony, and scholastic training. He wished to achieve originality without the monotonous climb to the peak of Parnassus, and this was his misfortune. Two anarchs of music, Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg, reached their goals after marching successfully through the established forms: and the prose versicles of Walt Whitman were achieved only after he had practised the ordinary rules of prosody. Not so with Moussorgsky, and while few youthful composers have been so carefully counselled, he either could not, or would not, take the trouble of mastering the rudiments of his art.

The result almost outweighs the evil—his opera, Boris Godounow. The rest of his music, with a few notable exceptions, is not worth the trouble of resuscitating. I say this although I disagree with the enthusiastic Pierre d'Alheim—whose book first made me acquainted with the Russian's art—and disagree, too, with Colvocoressi, whose study is likely to remain the definitive one. I've played the

piano music and found it banal in form and idea, far less individual than the piano pieces of Cui, Liadow, Stcherbatchef, Arensky, or Rachmaninof. The keyboard did not make special appeal to Moussorgsky. With his songs it is another matter. His lyrics are charming and characteristic. Liszt warmly praised La Chambre des Enfants, one of his most popular compositions. Moussorgsky would not study the elements of orchestration, and one of the penalties he paid was that his friend, Rimsky-Korsakof "edited" Boris Godounow (in 1896 a new edition appeared with changes, purely practical, as Colvocoressi notes, but the orchestration, clumsy as it is, largely remains the work of the composer) and La Khovanchtchina was scored by Rimsky-Korsakof, and no doubt "edited," that is, revised, what picture experts call "restored." So the musical baggage which is carried by Moussorgsky down the corridor of time is not large. But it is significant.

He was much influenced by Dargomyjski, particularly in the matter of realism. "I insist that the tone will directly translate the word," was an axiom of this musician. His friend and follower often carries this precept to the point of caricature. There are numerous songs which end in mere mimicry, parody, a pantomime of tone. The realism so much emphasized by the critic Stassow and others is really an enormous sincerity, and the reduction to an almost bare simplicity of the musical idea. His vigorous rhythmic sense enabled Moussorgsky to express bizarre motions and unusual situations that are at first blush extramusical. Many of his "reforms" are not reforms at all, rather the outcome of his passion for simplification. The framework of his opera—Boris Godounow—is rather commonplace, a plethora of choral numbers the most marked feature. In the original draft there was an absence of the feminine element, but after much pressure the composer was persuaded to weave several scenes into the general texture,

and let it be said that these are the weakest in the work. The primal power of the composition carries us away, not its form, which, to tell the truth, is rather old-fashioned.

His stubbornness is both a failure and a virtue. His sincerity covers a multitude of ineptitudes, but it is a splendid sincerity. His preference for unrelated tones in his melodic scheme led to the dissociated harmonies of his operatic score, and this same Boris Godounow has much influenced French music,—as I have pointed out earlier in this volume—a source at which Claude Debussy drank—not to mention Dukas, Ravel, and others—whose more sophisticated scores prove this. Of Moussorgsky, Debussy has remarked that he reminded him of a curious savage who at every step traced by his emotions discovers music. And Boris Godounow is virgin soil. That is why I have called its creator a Primitive. He has achieved the naïve attitude toward music which in the plastic arts is the very essence of the Flemish Primitives. Nature made him deaf to other men's music. In his savage craving for absolute originality—the most impossible of all "absolutes"—he sought to abstract from the art its chief components. He would have it in its naked innocence: rhythmic, undefiled by customary treatment, and never swerving from the "truth" of the poem. His devotion to the verbal text and dramatic action out-Wagners Wagner. Moussorgsky did not approve of Wagner's gigantic orchestral apparatus; he wished to avoid all that would distract the spectator from the stage—for him Wagner was too much "symphonist," not enough dramatist. Action, above all, no thematic development in the academic sense, were the Russian's watchwords. Paul Cézanne is a Primitive among modern painters, inasmuch as he discards the flamboyant rhetoric and familiar points d'appui of the schools and achieves a certain naïveté. The efforts of Moussorgsky were analogous. He employed leading motives charily, and as he disliked in-

tricate polyphony, his music moves in massive blocks following the semi-detached tableaux of the opera.

But a man is never entirely the master of his genius, and while Moussorgsky fought the stars in their courses, he nevertheless poured out upon paper the richest colors and images, created human characters and glorified the "people." He "went to the people," to the folk-melody, and in Pushkin he found the historical story of Czar Boris, neuropathic, criminal, and half crazy, which he manipulated to serve his purpose. The chorus is the protagonist, despite the stirring dramatic scenes allotted to Boris. After all, the "people," that mystic quantity in Russian art, must have a spokesman. Notwithstanding this every tune to be found in Pratsch's Russian anthology, and utilized by the new men, was composed by an individual man. Art is never democratic, but it is all the stronger when it incarnates the woes and joys of the people—not quite the same thing as being composed by the "people." The tree is rooted in the soil, but the tree stands alone in the forest. The moujik dominates the stage, even after the generous lopping from the partition of some of the choruses.

The feeling for comedy which is to be found in many of the songs is not missing in the stage work. Moussorgsky loved Gogol, set his Le Mariage to music (only one act) and savored the salty humor of the great writer. But the composer has his tragic side, and therein he reminds me of Dostoïevsky—both men died during the same year—who but Dostoïevsky, if he had been a composer, could have written the malediction scene in Boris? As a matter of fact he did write a play on the same historical subject, but it has disappeared. There are many other contacts with Dostoïevsky—intense Slavophilism, adoration of Russia; its very soil is sacred; carelessness as to the externals of their art—a Chinese asymmetry is present in their architectonic; they both excel in portraying humor, broad, vulgar, up-

roarious, outrageous, reckless humor; and also in exposing the profundities of the Russian soul, especially the soul racked by evil and morbid thoughts. Dostoïevsky said: "The soul of another is a dark place, and the Russian soul is a dark place. . . ." The obsession of the abnormal is marked in novelist and composer. They are revolutionists, but in the heaven of the insurgent there are many mansions. (Beethoven—a letter to Zmeskell—wrote: "Might is the morality of men who distinguish themselves above others. It is my morality, anyhow.") Dostoïevsky and Moussorgsky were not unlike temperamentally. Dostoïevsky always repented in haste only to sin again at leisure; with Moussorgsky it was the same. Both men suffered from some sort of moral lesion. Dostoïevsky was an epileptic, and the nature of Moussorgsky's "mysterious nervous ailment" is unknown to me; possibly it was a mild or masked epilepsy. Moussorgsky was said to have been a heavy drinker—his biographer speaks of him as being "ravaged by alcohol"—a failing not rare in Russia. The "inspissated gloom" of his work, its tenebrous gulfs and musical vertigoes are true indices of his morbid pathology. He was of a pious nature, as was Dostoïevsky; but he might have subscribed to the truth of Remy de Gourmont's epigram: "Religion est l'hôpital de l'amour." Love, however, does not play a major rôle in his life or art, yet it permeates both, in a sultry, sensual manner.

Boris Godounow was successfully produced January 24, 1874, at the St. Petersburg Opera with a satisfactory cast. At once its native power was felt and its appalling longueurs, technical crudities and minor shortcomings were recognized as the inevitable slag in the profusion of rich ore. A Russian opera, more Russian than Glinka! It was the "high noon," as Nietzsche would say, of the composer—the latter part of whose career was clouded by a morose pessimism and disease. There is much ugly music, but it is

always characteristic. Despite the ecclesiastical modes and rare harmonic progressions the score is Muscovite, not Oriental—the latter element is a stumbling-block in the development of so many Russian composers. The melancholy is Russian, the tunes are Russian, and the inn-scene, apart from the difference of historical periods, is as Russian as Gogol. No opera ever penned is less "literary," less "operatic," or more national than this one.

Rimsky-Korsakof, who died only a few years ago, was the junior of Moussorgsky (born 1844), and proved during the latter's lifetime, and after his death, an unshaken friendship. The pair dwelt together for some time and criticised each other's work. If Balakirev laid the foundation of Moussorgsky's musical education (in composition, not piano-playing) Rimsky-Korsakof completed it; as far as he could. The musical gift of the latter was more lyrical than any of his fellow students' at Balakirev's. Without having a novel "message," he developed as a master-painter in orchestration. He belongs in the category of composers who are more prolific in the coining of images than the creation of ideas. He "played the sedulous ape" to Berlioz and it was natural, with his fanciful imagination and full-blooded temperament, that his themes are clothed in shining orchestration, that his formal sense would work to happier ends within the elastic form of the Liszt symphonic poem. He wrote symphonies and a "symphoniette" on Russian themes, but his genius is best displayed in freer forms. His third symphony, redolent of Haydn, with a delightful scherzo, his fugues, quartet, ballets, operas—he composed fifteen, some of which are still popular in Russia—prove him a past master in his technical medium; but the real engaging and fantastic personality of the man evaporates in his academic work. He is at his top notch in Sadko, with its depiction of both a calm and stormy sea; in Antar, with its evocation of vast, immemorial deserts; in Sche-

herazade, and its background of Bagdad and the fascinating atmosphere of the Arabian Nights.

The initial Sunday in December, 1878, at Paris, was a memorable afternoon for me. (I was then writing "special" stories to the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin,* and the rereading of my article in print has refreshed my memory.) I heard for the first time the music of Rimsky-Korsakof, also the name of Modeste Moussorgsky. The symphonic poem, Sadko, was hissed and applauded at a Pasdeloup concert in the Cirque d'Hiver, for the new music created, on the whole, a disturbing impression. To quiet the rioting in the audience—it came to shouts and fisticuffs—the conductor, Jacques Pasdeloup (whose real name was Jacob Wolfgang) played Weber's Invitation to the Valse, arranged by Berlioz, which tribute to a national composer—neglected when alive, glorified after death—put the huge gathering of musical "chauvinistes" into better humor. Sitting next to me and rather amused, I fancy, because of my enthusiasm for Sadko, was a young Russian, a student at the Sorbonne. He liked Rimsky-Korsakof and understood the new music better than I, and explained to me that Sadko was too French, too much Berlioz, not enough Tartar. I didn't, at the time, take all this in, nor did I place much credence in his declaration that Russia had a young man living in St. Petersburg, its greatest composer, a truly national one, as national as Taras Boulba, or Dead Souls. Moussorgsky was his name, and despite his impoverished circumstances, or probably because of them, he was burning the candle at both ends and in the middle. He had finished his masterpieces before 1878. I was not particularly impressed and I never saw the Russian student again though I often went to the Sorbonne. I was therefore interested in 1896 when Pierre d'Alheim's monograph appeared and I recalled the name of Moussorgsky, but it was only several seasons ago and at Paris I heard for the first time both his operas.

In 1889 Rimsky-Korsakof directed two concerts of Russian music at the Trocadero and Paris fell in love with his compositions. He not only orchestrated the last opera of his friend Moussorgsky, but also Dargomyjski's The Stone Guest, and with the assistance of his pupil, Glazounow, completed the score of Prince Igor, by Borodine. He was an indefatigable workman, and his fame will endure because of "handling" of gorgeous orchestral tints. He is an impressionist, a stylist, the reverse of Moussorgsky, and he has the "conscience of the ear" which his friend lacked. Praised by Liszt, admired by Von Bülow, he revealed the influence of the Hungarian. Profound psychologist he was not; an innovator like Moussorgsky he never would have been; the tragic eloquence vouchsafed Tschaikovsky was denied him. But he wielded a brush of incomparable richness, he spun the most evanescent and iridescent web, previous to the arrival of Debussy: he is the Berlioz of Russia, as Moussorgsky is its greatest nationalist in tone.

I make this discursion because, for a period, the paths of the two composers were parallel. Tschaikovsky did not admire Moussorgsky, spoke slightingly of his abilities, though he conceded that with all his roughness he had power of a repellent order. Turgenieff did not understand him. The opera La Khovanchtchina, notwithstanding the preponderance of the chorus—in Russia choral singing is the foundation of musical culture—I found more "operatic" than Boris Godounow. The Old Believers become as much of a bore as the Anabaptists in Meyerbeer; the intrigue of the second plan not very vital; but as a composition it is more finished than its predecessor. The women are more attractive, the lyric elements better developed, but the sense of barbaric grandeur of Boris is not evoked; nor is its dark stream of cruelty present. Doubtless the belief that Modeste Moussorgsky is a precursor of much modern music is founded on truth, and while his musical genius is not to be challenged, yet do I believe that he has been given too

lofty a position in art. At the best his work is unachieved, truncated, a torso of what might have been a noble statue. But it will endure. It is difficult to conceive a time when, for Russia, Boris Godounow will cease to thrill.

XXIII

GEORGE SAND

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man, self-called George Sand!

—Mrs. Browning.

I

Who reads George Sand nowadays? was asked at the time of her centenary (she was born, 1804; died, 1876). Paris responded in gallant phrases. She was declared one of the glories of French literature. Nevertheless, we are more interested in the woman, in her psychology, than in her interminable novels. The reason is simple; her books were built for her day, not to endure. She never created a vital character. Her men and women are bundles of attributes, neither flesh nor blood nor good red melodrama. She was a wonderful journalist, one is tempted to say the first of her sex, and the first feminist. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was a shriller propagandist, yet she accomplished no more for the cause than her French neighbor, not alone because she didn't smoke big cigars or wear trousers, but on general principles. In a word, Mrs. Godwin didn't exactly practise what she preached and George Sand did. For her there was no talk of getting the vote; her feminism was a romantic revolt, not economic or political rebellion. George Sand should be enshrined as the patron saint of female suffragism. By no means a deep thinker, for she reflected as in a mirror the ideas of the intellectual men she met, she had an enormous vogue. Her reputation was world-wide.

We know more about her now, thanks to the three volumes recently published by Vladimir Karénine (the pen-

name of a Russian lady, Mme. Komaroff, the daughter of Dmitri Stassow). This writer has brought her imposing work (thus far over 1,700 pages) down to 1848, and, as much happened in the life of her heroine after that, we may expect at least two more fat volumes. Her curiosity has been insatiable. She has read all the historical and critical literature dealing with Sand. She has at first-hand from friends and relatives facts hitherto unpublished, and she is armed with a library of documents. More, she has read and digested the hundred-odd stories of the fecund writer, and actually analyzes their plots, writes at length of the characters, and incidentally throws light on her own intellectual processes.

Mme. Karénine is not a broad critic. She is a painstaking historian. While some tales of Sand are worth reading —The Devil's Pool, Letters of a Voyager, even Consuelo, above all, her autobiography—the rest is a burden to the spirit. Her facility astounds, and also discourages. She confesses that with her writing was like the turning on of a water-tap, the stream always flowed, a literary hydrant. Awaken her in the night and she could resume her task. She was of the centrifugal temperament, hence the resultant shallowness of her work. She had charm. She had style, serene, flowing, also tepid and fatuous, the style detested by Charles Baudelaire, and admired by Turgenieff and Renan and Lamennais. Baudelaire remarked of this "best seller" that she wrote her chefs d'œuvre as if they were letters, and posted them. The "style coulant," praised by bourgeois critics, he abhorred, as it lacked accent, relief, individuality. "She is the Prudhomme of immorality," he said—not a bad definition—and "she is stupid, heavy, and a chatterer." She loves the proletarian, and her sentiment is adapted to the intelligent wife of the concierge and the sentimental harlot. Which shows that even such a versatile critic as Baudelaire had his prejudices. The sweetness and

nobility of her nature were recognized by all her associates.

Nietzsche is no less impolite. She derives from Rousseau—he might have added Byron, also—she is false, artificial, inflated, exaggerated; . . . her style is of a variegated wall-paper pattern. She betrays her vulgarity in her ambition to expose her generous feelings. She is, like all the Romantics, a cold, insufferable artist. She wound herself up like a timepiece and—wrote. Nietzsche, like his great master, Schopenhauer, was never a worshipper of the irresponsible sex. And her immorality? Père Didon said that her books are more immoral than Zola's, because more insidious, tinted as they are with false ideas and sentiments. George Sand immoral? What bathos! How futile her fist-shakings at conventional morality. As well say Marie Corelli or Ouida is immoral. This literature of gush and gabble is as dangerous to the morals of our time as the Ibsen plays or Æsop's fables.

Unreality, cheap socialism, and sentiment of the downtrodden shop girl are the stigmata of the Sand school. She has written many memorable pages, many beautiful pages; such masters as Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Delacroix, Flaubert, Ballanche, Heine, Dostoïevsky, and Turgenieff have told us so. Her idyllic stories are of an indubitable charm. But her immorality, like her style, is old-fashioned—there is a dating mark even in immorality, for if, as Ibsen maintained, all truths stale and die after two decades, how much less life may be allowed a lie? Your eternal verities, then, may be as evanescent as last year's mist.

Mme. Karénine does not belong to the School of Moral Rehabilitation, so prevalent here and in England. She does not spare her subject; indeed, makes out a worse case than we had supposed. She is not a prude and, if critically she is given to discovering a masterpiece under every bush planted by that indefatigable gardener, George Sand, she is quite aware of George's flagrant behavior. The list of

lovers is a longer one than given by earlier biographers. Dumas fils, a close observer of the novelist, asserts that she had no temperament at all, thus corroborating the earlier testimony of Heine. This further complicates the problem. She was not, then, a perverse pursuer of young genius, going about seeking whom she could devour, and indulging in what Mother Church calls morose delectation! A "cold devil"—à la Félicien Rops. I doubt this. Maternal she was. I once described her as a maternal nymphomaniac, a metaphysical Messalina. She presided at numerous artistic accouchements; she was, pre-eminently, the critical midwife to many poets, pianists, painters, composers, and thinkers. If she made some of them unhappy, she brought into the life of others much happiness. Matthew Arnold believed in her, so did the Brownings, Elizabeth and Robert; George Eliot admired her; she, too, was rowing in the same kind of a moral galley, but with heavier oars and through the Sargossian seas of British prudery.

In contact with the finest minds of her times, George Sand was neither a moral monster nor yet the arrant Bohemian that legend has fashioned of her. She was a fond mother, and a delightful grandmother. She had the feather-bed temperament, and soothed masculine nerves exacerbated by the cruel exigencies of art. Jules Laforgue would have said of her: Stability, thy name is Woman! She died in the odor of domestic sanctity, mourned by her friends, and the idol of the literary world.

How account for her uprightness of character, her abundant virtues—save one? She was as true as the compass to her friends, to her family. Either she has been slandered or else she is an anomaly in the moral world. In either case we need a new transvaluation of morals. She was not made of the stuff of courtesans, she refused to go to the devil. Like Aspasia, she was an immoralist. As an artist she could have had social position. But she didn't crave it;

she didn't crave notoriety; paradoxical as it may sound, notoriety was thrust upon her. At Nohant, her château in Berri, there was usually a conglomeration of queer people: Socialists, reformers, crazy dreamers, artists, and poets, occasionally working men in their blouses. Of that mystic crew Matthew Arnold could have repeated his famous "What a set!" which he despairingly uttered about the Shelley-Godwin gatherings.

II

George Sand was a normal woman. She preferred the society of men; with women she was always on her guard, a cat sleeping with one eye open. Her friendship with Mme. D'Agoult, the elective affinity of Liszt, soon ended. She never summered in soft Sapphic seas, nor hankered after poetic Leucadian promontories. She never did approvingly quote the verse of Baudelaire beginning: "Lo! the Lesbians their sterile sex advancing." She was a woman from top to toe. Nor did she indulge often in casual gallant adventures. Her affairs were romantic. With the author of Carmen her spiritual thermometer registered at its lowest. She endured him just eight days, and Mérimée is responsible for the tasteless anecdote which he tells as his reason for leaving her. He saw her of a cold morning making the fire, her head in curl-papers, and attired in an old dressing-gown. No passion could survive that shock, and selfish Prosper at once grew frigid.

A French expression may suit George: She always had her heart "en compote." And she was incorrigibly naïve—they called it "Idealism" in those days—witness her affair with Doctor Pagello in Venice. The first handsome Italian she met she fell in love with and allowed poor sick Alfred de Musset to return to Paris alone, although she had promised his mother to guard him carefully. He was suffering

from an attack of delirium tremens in Venice. He had said of himself: "I am not tender, I am excessive." He was. His name, unlike Keats's, is writ in absinthe, not water. Nevertheless, you can reread him.

But the separation didn't kill him. He was twenty-two, George six years older. Their affair struggled along about six months. Alfred consoled himself with Rachel and many others. He was more poet than artist, more artist than man; and a pretty poor specimen of a man. He wrote the history of his love for George. She followed suit. This sphinx of the ink-well was a journalist born. She used her lovers for "copy"; and for that matter Byron and Goethe did the same. George always discoursed of her thirst for the "infinite." It was only a species of moral indigestion. Every romance ended in disillusionment. The one with Chopin lasted the longest, nearly ten years. She first met the Pole in 1836, not in 1837, as the Chopinists believe. Liszt introduced them. Later Chopin quarrelled with Liszt about her. Chopin did not like her at first; blue stockings were not to the taste of this conventional man of the world. Yet he succumbed. He died of the liaison itself, rather than from the separation in 1847. Sand divined the genius of Chopin before many of his critical contemporaries. She had the courage—and the wisdom—to write that one of his Tiny Preludes contained more genuine music than much of Meyerbeer's mighty Trumpetings. And Meyerbeer ruled the world of music when she said this.

The immediate cause of this separation I hinted at in my early study of Chopin. Solange Sand, the daughter of George, was a thoroughly perverse girl. She not only flirted with Chopin, seeking to lure him from her mother—truly a Gallic triangle—but she so contrived matters that her mother was forced to allow the intriguing girl to marry her lover, Clésinger, the sculptor. The knowledge of this Mme. Sand kept from Chopin for a while because she

feared that he would side with Solange. He promptly did so, being furious at the deception. He it was who broke with George, possibly aided thereto by her nagging. He saw much of Solange, and pecuniarily helped her young and unhappy household. He announced by letter to George the news that she was a grandmother; they occasionally corresponded.

Clésinger did not get on with his mother-in-law. She once boxed his ears. He drank, gambled, and brutally treated Solange. George Sand suffered the agony of seeing in her daughter's life a duplicate of her own. Her husband, François-Casimir Dudevant, a debauched country squire, drank, was unfaithful, and beat her betimes. He treated his dogs better. No wonder she ran away to Paris, there to live with Jules Sandeau. (She had married in 1822, and brought her husband five hundred thousand francs.)

But, rain or shine, joy or sorrow, she did her daily stint at her desk. She was a journalist and wrote by the sweat of her copious soul. She was the rare possessor of the Will-to-Sit-Still, as metaphysicians would say. She thought with her nerves and felt with her brain. She was, morally speaking, magnificently disorganized. She was a subtle mixer of praise and poison, and her autobiography is stuffed with falsehoods. She couldn't help falsifying facts, for she was an incurable sentimentalist. Heine has cruelly said that women writers write with one eye on the paper, the other on some man; all except the Countess Hahn-Hahn, who had one eye. George Sand wrote with both eyes fixed on a man, or men. Charity should cover a multitude of her missteps. In her case we don't know all. We know too much. Still, I believe she was more sinned against than sinning.

III

Since the fatal day when our earliest ancestors left the Garden of Eden, when Adam digged and Eve span, there have been a million things that women were told they shouldn't attempt, that is, not without the penalty of losing their "womanliness," or interfering with their family duties. But they continued, did these same refractory females, to overcome obstacles, leap social hurdles, make mock of antique taboos, and otherwise disport themselves as if they were free individuals, and not petticoated with absurd prejudices. They loved. They married. They became mothers. George Sand was in the vanguard of this small army of protestants against the prevailing moral code (for woman only). Her unhappy marriage was a blazing bonfire of revolt. The misunderstood woman at last had her innings. Sand stood for all that was wicked and hateful in the eyes of law and order. Yet, compared with the feminine fiction of our days, Sand's is positively idylic. She is one parent of the Woman movement, unpalatable as her morals may prove to churchgoers. She acted in life what so many of our belligerent ladies urge others to do—and never attempt on their own account. George was brave. And George was polyandrous. If she hadn't much temperament, she had the courage to throw her bonnet over the windmill when she saw the man she liked, and if she suffered later, she, being an artist, made a literary asset of these sufferings. She is the true ancestor of the New Woman. Her books were considered so immoral by her generation that to be seen reading them was enough to damn a man. Other males, other tales.

She dared "to live her own life," as the Ibsenites say, and she was the original Ibsen girl, proof-before-all-letters. I haven't the slightest doubt that to-day she would speak

to street crowds, urging the vote for woman. Why shouldn't woman vote? she might be supposed to argue. There will be less dyspepsia in America when women desert the kitchen for the halls of legislation. Men, perforce, are better cooks. So, by all means, let woman vote. Will it not be an acid test applied to our alleged democratic institutions? George Sand believed herself to be a social-democrat. She trusted in Pierre Leroux's mysticism, trusted in the phalanstery of Fourier, in the doctrines of Saint-Simon, the latter especially because of her intimacy with Franz Liszt; nevertheless, she might shudder at the emancipation of ideas in our century, and, as she had a sensitive soul, modern democracy might prove for her a very delirium of ugliness. She was always æsthetic. She could portray with a tender pen the stammering litany of young caresses, but she couldn't face a fact in her fiction. Her Indianas, Lélias, and the other romantic insurgents against society are Byronic, Laras in petticoats. All rose-water and rage, they are as rare in life as black lightning on a blue sky. Her stories are as sad and as ridiculous as a nightcap.

IV

George Sand was not beautiful. Edouard Grenier declares that she was short and stout. "Her eyes were wonderful, but a little too close together." Do you recall Heine's phrase, "Femme avec l'œil sombre"? Black they were, those eyes, and they reminded Grenier at once of unpolished marble and velvet. "Her nose was thick and not overshapely. She spoke with great simplicity and her manner was very quiet." With these rather negative physical attractions she conquered men like Napoleon. Even prim President Thiers tried to kiss her and her indignation was epical. He is said to have giggled in a silly way when reproved. It seems incredible. (Did you ever see the Bonnat portrait of this

philistine statesman?) Liszt never wholly yielded to her. Mérimée despised her in his chilly fashion. Michel de Bourges treated her rudely. Poor Alfred de Musset—who, when he was short of money, would dine in an obscure tavern, and, with a toothpick in his mouth, would stand at the entrance of some fashionable boulevard café—seems to have loved her romantically, the sort of love she craved. What was her attraction? She had brains and magnetism, but that she could have loved all the lovers she is credited with is impossible.

There is, to begin at the beginning, Jules Sandeau, who was followed by De Musset; after him the deluge: Doctor Pagello—who was jilted when he followed her to Paris; Michel de Bourges, Pierre Leroux, Félicien Mallefille, Chopin, Mérimée, Manceau, and the platonic friendship with Flaubert. This was her sanest friendship; the correspondence proves it. She went to the Magny dinners with Flaubert, Goncourt, Renan, Zola, Turgenev, and Daudet. Her influence on the grumbling giant of Croisset was tonic. It was she who should have written Sentimental Education. But where is that sly old voluptuary, Sainte-Beuve, or the elder Dumas (the Pasha of many tales), or Liszt, who was her adorer for a brief period, notwithstanding Mme. Karénine's denial? She denies the Leroux affair, too. Are these all? Who dare say?

Dumas fils carried a bundle of Chopin's letters from Warsaw and Sand buried them at Nohant. This story, doubted by Doctor Niecks, has been corroborated since by Mme. Karénine. What a loss for inquisitive critics! George was named Lucile Aurore Dupin, and she was descended from a choice chain of rowdy and remotely royal ancestors. In her mature years she became optimistic, proper, matronly. She was a cheerful milch cow for her two children. It is delicious comedy to read the warnings to her son Maurice against actresses. Solange she gave up as

hopelessly selfish, wicked for the sheer sake of wickedness, a sort of inverted and evil art-for-art.

Nearly all the facts of the quarrel with Solange are to be found in Samuel Rocheblave's George Sand et Sa Fille. After Solange left Clésinger she formed a literary partnership with the Marquis Alfieri, nephew of the great Italian poet. "Soli" opened a salon in Paris, to which came Gambetta, Jules Ferry, Floquet, Taine, Hervé, Henry Fouquier, and Weiss, the critic who describes her as having the "curved Hebraic nose of her mother and hair coal black." She, too, must write novels. She died at Nohant, her mother's old home, in 1899. Maurice Sand, her brother, died ten years earlier.

Jules Claretie tells an amusing story about Sand. In 1870, when she was old and full of honors, she went one day to visit the Minister of Instruction. There, being detained in the antechamber, she fell into a pleasant conversation with a well-groomed, decorated old gentleman. After ten minutes' chat the unknown consulted his watch, arose, and bowed to Mme. Sand. "If I could always find such a charming companion I would visit the Ministry often," he gallantly said, and went away. The novelist called an attendant. "Who is that amiable gentleman?" she asked. "Ah, that is M. Jules Sandeau of the French Academy." And he, her first flame in Paris, inquired the name of the lady. What a lot of head-shaking and moralizing must have ensued! The story is pretty enough to have been written in the candied thunder of Sand herself.

De Lenz, author of several rather neglected volumes about musicians, did not like Sand because she was rude to him when introduced by Chopin. He asked her concierge, "What is Madame properly called—Dudevant?" "Ah, Monsieur, she has many names," was the reply. But it is her various names, and not her novels, that interest us, and will intrigue the attention of posterity.

XXIV

O. W.

It is an enormous advertisement nowadays to win a reputation as a martyr—whether to an idea, a vice, or a scolding wife. You have a label by which a careless public is able to identify you. Oscar Wilde was a born advertiser. From the sunflower days to Holloway Gaol, and from the gaol to the Virgins of Dieppe, he kept himself in the public eye. Since his death the number of volumes dealing with his glittering personality, negligible verse and more or less insincere prose, have been steadily accumulating; why, I'm at a loss to understand. If he was a victim to British "middle-class morality," then have done with it, while regretting the affair. If he was not, all the more reason to maintain silence. But no, the clamor increases, with the result that there are many young people who believe that Oscar was a great man, a great writer, when in reality he was neither. Here is Alfred Douglas slamming the memory of his old chum in a not particularly edifying manner, though he tells some truths, wholesome and unwholesome. Henley paid an unpleasant tribute to his dead friend, Robert Louis Stevenson, but the note of hatred was absent; evidently literary depreciation was the object. However, there are many to whom the truth will be more welcome than the spectacle of broken friendship. Another, and far more welcome book, is that written by Martin Birnbaum, a slender volume of "fragments and memories." His Oscar Wilde is the Oscar of the first visit to New York, and there are lots of anecdotes and facts that are sure to please collectors of Wildiana —or Oscariana—which is it? Pictures, too. I confess that his early portraits flatter the Irish writer. "He looked like an old maid in a boarding-house," said a well-known Phila-

delphia portrait-painter. He was ugly, not a "beautiful Greek god," as his fervent admirers think. His mouth was loose, ill-shaped, his eyes dull and "draggy," his forehead narrow, the cheeks flabby, his teeth protruding and "horsy," his head and face was pear-shaped. He was a big fellow, as was his brother Willie Wilde, who once lived in New York, but he gave no impression of muscular strength or manliness; on the other hand, he was not a "Sissy," as so many have said. Indeed, to know him was to like him; he was the "real stuff," as the slang goes, and if he had only kept away from a pestilential group of flatterers and spongers, his end might have been different.

I've heard many eloquent talkers in my time, best of them all was Barbey d'Aurévilly, of Paris, after whom Oscar palpably modelled—lace cuffs, clouded cane, and other minor affectations. But when Oscar was in the vein, which was usually once every twenty-four hours, he was inimitable. Edgar Saltus will bear me out in this. For copiousness, sustained wit, and verbal brilliancy the man had few equals. It was amazing, his conversation. I met him when he came here, and once again much later. Possibly that is why I care so little for his verse, a pasticcio of Swinburne —(in the wholly admirable biography of this poet by Mr. Gosse, reference is made to O. W. by the irascible hermit of Putney: "I thought he seemed a harmless young nobody. . . . I should think you in America must be as tired of his name as we are in London of Mr. Barnum's and his Jumbos")—Milton, Tennyson, or for his prose, a dilution of Walter Pater and Flaubert. His Dorian Grey, apart from the inversion element, is poor Huysmans's—just look into that masterpiece, A Rebours; not to mention Poe's tale, The Oval Portrait; while Salomé is Flaubert in operetta form—his gorgeous Herodias watered down for uncritical public consumption. It is safe to say the piece—which limps dramatically—would never have been seriously

considered if not for the Richard Strauss musical setting. As for the vaunted essay on Socialism, I may only call attention to one fact, *i. e.*, it does not deal with socialism at all, but with philosophical anarchism; besides, it is not remarkable in any particular. His Intentions is his best, because his most "spoken" prose. The fairy-tales are graceful exercises by a versatile writer, with an excellent memory, but if I had children I'd give them the Alice in Wonderland books, through which sweeps a bracing air, and not the hothouse atmosphere of Wilde. The plays are fascinating as fireworks, and as remote from human interest. Perhaps I'm in error, yet, after reading Pater, Swinburne, Rossetti, Huysmans, I prefer them to the Wilde imitations, strained as they are through his very gay fancy.

He wasn't an evil-minded man; he posed à la Byron and Baudelaire; but to hear his jolly laughter was to rout any notion of the morbid or the sinister. He was materialistic, he loved good cookery, old wines, and strong tobacco. Positively the best book Wilde ever inspired was The Green Carnation, by Robert Hichens, which book gossip avers set the ball rolling that fetched up behind prison-bars. In every-day life he was a charming, companionable, and very human chap, and, as Frederick James Gregg says, dropped more witty epigrams in an hour than Whistler did annually. The best thing Whistler ever said to Wilde was his claiming in advance as his own anything Oscar might utter; and here Whistler was himself borrowing an epigram of Baudelaire, as he borrowed from the same source and amplified the idea that nature is monotonous, nature is a plagiarist from art, and all the rest of such paradoxical chatter and inconsequent humor. Both Whistler and Wilde have been taken too seriously—I mean on this side. Whistler was a great artist. Wilde was not. Whistler discoursed wittily, waspishly, but he wasn't knee-high to a grasshopper when confronted with Wilde. As for the tragic dénouement that

has been thrashed to death by those who know, suffice to add that William Butler Yeats told me that he called at the Wilde home after the scandal had broken, and saw Willie Wilde, who roundly denounced his brother for his truly brave attitude—always attitudes with Oscar. He would not be persuaded to leave London, and perhaps it was the wisest act of his life, though neither the Ballad of Reading Gaol nor De Profundis carry conviction. Need I say that my judgment is personal? I have read in cold type that Pater was a "forerunner" of Wilde; that Wilde is a second Jesus Christ—which latter statement stuns one. (The Whitmaniacs are fond of claiming the same for Walt, who is not unlike that silly and sinister monster described by Rabelais as quite overshadowing the earth with its gigantic wings, and after dropping vast quantities of mustard-seed on the embattled hosts below flew away yawping: "Carnival, Carnival, Carnival!") For me, he simply turned into superior "journalism" the ideas of Swinburne, Pater, Flaubert, Huysmans, De Quincey, and others. If his readers would only take the trouble to study the originals there might be less talk of his "originality." I say all this without any disparagements of his genuine gifts; he was a born newspaper man. Henry James calls attention to the fact that the so-called æsthetic movement in England never flowered into anything so artistically perfect as the novels of Gabriel d'Annunzio. Which is true; but he could have joined to the name of the Italian poet and playwright that of Aubrey Beardsley, the one "genius" of the "Eighteen-Nineties." Beardsley gave us something distinctly individual. Wilde, a veritable cabotin, did not—nothing but his astounding conversation, and that, alas! is a fast fading memory.

XXV

VERDI'S OTELLO

The announcement that Otello is to be presented by the Chicago Opera Association next Tuesday evening at the Manhattan Opera House is interesting to lovers of Verdi's hot-blooded music drama. That it is not often heard is because of the difficulty in finding singing actors to interpret the work. Since Tamagno and Victor Maurel, the ideal Otello and the ideal Iago, we have had no two such interpreters. Antonio Scotti was a remarkable Iago, and from time to time some unhappy tenor attempts to bend the bow of Ulysses, but the two artists who set the town on fire twenty-five years ago have not been rivalled. Tamagno with his barbaric cry, "Sangue, sangue"—"Blood, blood!"—is unforgetable. In the killing of Desdemona he fell short of his great dramatic model, the elder Salvini, because, as we have elsewhere related, he left his spectators in doubt as to the disposition of the pillow. But then his Desdemona was the lovely Emma Eames, and that, no doubt, accounted for the indecision of the murderous and amorous Moor at the fatal moment.

Otello in 1887 set the musical world agog with surprise, curiosity, and delight. It reveals little of the narrow, noisy, violent, and vulgar Verdi of 1850. The character drawing is by a man who is master of his material. The plot moves in majestical splendor and the musical psychology, especially in the case of Iago, is often subtle. Verdi has at last flowered. Much of his earlier music, despite the admirable melodic flow in Traviata, Rigoletto, Trovatore, smelling ranker of the soil, showing abundant thematic invention, was but the effort of a hot-headed man of the footlights, a

seeker after applause and money. In Otello his musical provincialisms have well-nigh vanished. The writing is clear, the passion controlled, the effects aimed at easily compassed. The masterly craft of Iago is cleverly contrasted with the fiery passion of Otello, and Shakespeare is suggested; although an Italian Shakespeare. However, the English poet is more Italian than the Italian in this moving drama.

Otello is veritable music drama; its composer seldom halts to symphonize his events as does Wagner. Arrigo Boito, most intellectual of librettists, has skeletonized the story; Verdi's music endows it with vitality, grace, fleshly contours, brilliancy. The Italian poet has not gravely disturbed the original text. It is but a compliment to his assimilation of the Shakespearian spirit to state that Iago's credo, an explosion of nihilism and hatred, does not seem out of perspective in the picture. It is an intercalation of Boito's, as were the Cypriote choruses in Act II. The rest is Shakespeare undefiled, barring a few happy transpositions from the Senate speech to the duo at the close of Act I.

As we have said, the characterization is masterly throughout. Do not let us balk at comparisons, nor, for that matter, at superlatives. With the exceptions of Mozart and Wagner, no composer has thus far lived who could have painted the hot-blooded Moor and the cynical cannikin-clinker, set them facing each other, allowing them to work out their fates, musically speaking, as has Giuseppe Verdi. The key to Otello is its characterization. The medium in which Verdi bids his puppets of destiny to move, their fluidity, their humanity, with the complete dissection of their secret springs of action—these elements are almost incalculable. Criticism can only endeavor to disentangle them. Whether he is listening to his cunning Ancient, or caressing Desdemona, or raging like the hardy Numæan lion, it is always Otello, the Moor of Venice, a loving, suffering,

living man—Shakespeare's Othello transposed to a fresco of magnificent tones.

The character does not evoke a flashy, operatic ranter. Nor does Iago, either as the bluff soldier or the loathsome serpent stinging his chieftain's soul, ever lag dramatically, ever mimic the conventional attitudes of transpontine melodrama. It is always Iago, "the spirit that denies," perhaps underlined, for music must emphasize the emotions. Desdemona is drawn in relief to her furious lover and warrior, and as a white cloud of purity in contrast with her cold-blooded maligner. Verdi has assigned her gentle music, the Ave Maria, the Willow Song. She is a sweet background upon which was etched the darker, sinister motives of the play. No masculine shadow but her lord's has been projected across her snowy, virginal soul. Delicacy and vivacity reveal, little by little, the inner workings of her girlish nature. The other figures, Cassio, Emilia, are sketches on the second plan, but figures that contribute to the density of the dramatic scheme without detracting from our interest in the protagonists.

From the opening storm to the strangling scene the music flows as swiftly as does the action of the spoken drama. Rich, varied, eloquent, the orchestra seldom tarries in its acute and vivid commentary. There is scant employment of typical motives; the kiss theme in Act I is sounded with psychologic fidelity when Otello dies. Only in the handkerchief trio is there pause for instrumental elaboration; but in the main old, set forms are avoided, and while there are melodic currents they seldom crystallize. The duo at the end of Act I, the Credo of unfaith, and Otello's frenzied exhortation in Act II; the tremendous outburst in the following act, with Iago's sardonically triumphant exclamation, "Behold the lion!" as he plants his scornful heel on the recumbent Otello—then the final catastrophe—these about summarize the high lights. Throughout there are

picturesque and poignant strokes, effects of massed splendor, and hovering about the tempest-stirred souls is an atmosphere of gloom, doom, guilt, and melancholy foreboding.

Verdi felt the moods of the poet and made them live again in his score. Otello and Iago grow before our eyes and ears from act to act. The simple-hearted, trusting general with his agonized cry, "Miseria mia," develops into a ferocious savage thirsting for blood. He is the jealous male, who sees red. The multitudinous music is incarnadine with blood. And it is all vocal. It is written for the voice, which is the centre of gravity in this astounding drama of souls bedevilled, and not the orchestra. The pedestal is not bigger than the statue, as is the case with Salammbô. Another such Iago, subtle, sinister, evil incarnate, withal a dangerously attractive fellow, such an impersonation as Victor Maurel's, may never be duplicated. And this remarkable singing actor had the advantage of Verdi and Boito's advice when the music drama was produced at Milan, in 1887. Verdi's first idea of a title was Iago. This idea does not seem strange after a performance of Maurel.

The two most satisfying Iagos I remember were Henry Irving and Edwin Booth. Maurel's interpretation paralleled them at every point. Admitted that the singing heightened the impression, though it weakens the characterization, Maurel's Iago never betrayed a tendency toward the melodramatic; as difficult as treading on eggs without crushing them, he held a middle course, and he was both a picture and a dramatic happening. Malignant he was, but that is the "fat" of the part, but he underlined the reasons for his wicked actions. Iago is also a human being with a sound motive for revenge. I know you will remind me that critical "whitewashing" is become the fashion, that Nero, Simon Magus, Judas Iscariot, Benedict Arnold, Casanova —nay, even Lucifer, Prince of Morning, has Anatole France for a defender (in The Revolt of the Angels)—are

only getting their just dues at the hands of various apologists. De Quincey, a master casuist, has said that without Judas the drama of Jesus crucified would not have occurred. Everything is necessary. Nero was a much-abused monster, though Renan believes him to be the Beast mentioned in the Apocalypse—it seems now that there were no "atrocities" during the fabulous persecutions of the Christians, that Rome was not burned by Nero, who had no fiddle technic; but in the case of Iago there is something to be said in his favor. A pure devil, as we conceive devils to be, he was not.

A rough, hard-drinking soldier of fortune, he admits himself to be, and to call his advice, "Put money in thy purse," cynical is to contravene worldly wisdom. Otello had wronged him, Iago hated him for it, hated his wife for her alleged infidelity—Emilia denies her treachery—therefore, his revenge is credible. It is his method in achieving this revenge that revolts our sensibilities. The innocent Desdemona is crushed between the upper and lower millstones of inexorable destiny. Maurel did not paint his conception all black, but with many gradations and nuances. Not a movement but meant something; even that famous "psychological crook of Iago's left knee." Maurel was economical in gesture. His was an objective characterization. The drinking song was memorably, totally unlike his drinking lyrics in Don Giovanni and Hamlet. Suffice to say that Verdi intrusted him with the difficult task of "originating" two such widely sundered rôles as Falstaff and Iago. With them Victor Maurel made operatic history.

And now what is the most surprising thing about Otello? I think that it is the fact that it was composed when Verdi was past threescore and ten. This seems incredible. It seethes with the passion of middle manhood, with the fervors of a flowering maturity. No one before him had dreamed of setting Shakespeare in this royally tragic fash-

ion. Rossini but fluted with the theme. In Verdi, jealousy, love, envy, hatred, are handled by a master music dramatist. It is a wonderful thing that Verdi began it at a time when most men are preparing for the Great Adventure. Reversing the usual processes, this extraordinary Italian wrote younger music the older he grew. After Aïda, Otello. After grim tragedy, joyous comedy—Falstaffio. If he had survived until ninety years, Verdi might have bequeathed us an operetta that would have outpointed in wit and sparkling humor the mercurial Johann Strauss. And when we think of the later Verdi we should not forget his faithful friend and famulus, who played Wagner to his Faust—Arriga Boito.

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